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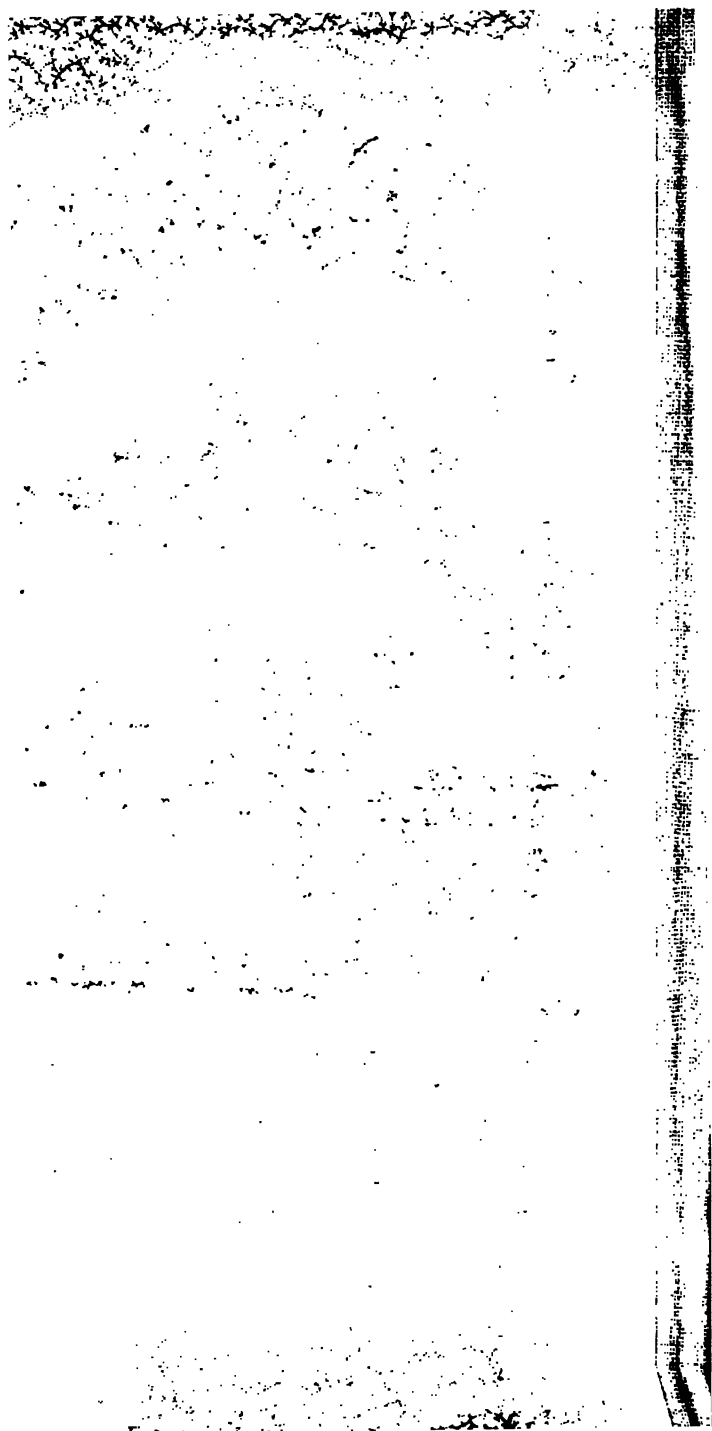
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MEDITATIONS

UPON

VARIOUS AND IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

AND SHORT PRAYERS ANNEXED.

With a PREFACE by the Reverend Mr. HERVEY,
AUTHOR of MEDITATIONS among the Tombs, &c. &c.

To which is now added,

SUBMISSION

TO THE

RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

OR,

The Necessity of trusting to a better Righteousness than our
own, opened and defended, in a plain, practical Discourse
on the Epistle to the Romans, chap. x. ver. 3.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

" Let the words of my mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart, be always ac-
ceptable in thy Sight, O Lord, my Strength and Redeemer." Psal. xix. 14.

By BENJAMIN JENKS,

Late Rector of Harley in Shropshire, and Chaplain to the
Right Honourable the Earl of Bradford.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. MATTHEWS, STRAND ; T. VERNOR,
, BIRCHIN-LANE ; AND OGILVY & SPEARE, HOLBORN.

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T H E

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Design carried on in this other Manual of Meditations, is not that of the Athenians, Acts xvii. 12. to spend my time, in telling some new thing. But (in imitation of a better precedent, 2 Pet. i. 13.) to *stir up* those for whose sake I write, by *putting them in remembrance*, that they may be mindful of doing, according to their understanding; tho' they be such, as need not to be taught, what before they did not know. That if I bring no news to their ears, yet I may excite some dormant notions in their minds; to make them more significant for their practical use: and that even after my decease, I may still be preaching by these papers, to such as can no more be my auditors.

Now if this will not pass for vindication of my appearing; so often as I have done to the world; nor give satisfaction to the question, Why I should be more forward this way, than many, more fit and able for the work? I shall make no other return, but to say, that as such do judge, they have good reason for their abstaining; so have I such reasons as I count sufficient for my writing. At which, should any murmur; rather would I bear their censure; than want such others kind acceptance of my labours, whom I see cause much more to regard: or than

lose yet a far greater pleasure, of doing what I can in my generation for the service and promotion of a holy, serious religion.

Now what is it, but the want of better considering, that proves to so many their utter undoing? When they will not give themselves time nor leave to think of the things that concern their souls; and have not the wit, nor the patience, to deliberate and reason with themselves, even upon the weightiest points, most needful to their salvation: and so they rush on, in a heedless precipitancy, upon sin and folly, upon peril and misery. Being so dead asleep in their sins: or their minds and thoughts so taken up and engaged about other matters; that as much as they know, they never regard to do them any good, but their very reason and self-reflexion, which distinguish them from brutes and machines, serve even for no more to them, than if they had no power at all of bethinking themselves, or employing their meditations; any further, than present objects and impulses, (striking on their outward senses) carried them away. Thus do they follow the mere impetus of lust and passion; as horse and mule that have no understanding. When, would they but pause and consider; they might so prevent the wickedness and danger. And to cast in some grave and solemn thoughts, (like water thrown on the fire) might abate the heat, if not quite put it out. Here then a seasonable meditation, may be worth even as much as man's salvation. And whoever are but well acquainted with this kind of exercise, need not be told, how great is the advantage, and how sweet the comfort.

Yet all this notwithstanding, I know not, whether a sort of men will allow the duty, thus to set the thoughts on work; for fear of enterprising any pious office, in their own will and strength: when their principle obliges them to believe that they must

P R E F A C E .

must be quiet, and do no more but watch and wait : till some divine afflatus come, and thrust them so upon it ; that they are not able to avoid it. But what then means the stirring up of God's gift that is in us? 2 Tim. 1. 6. And stirring up ourselves, to take hold of the Lord? Isa. lxiv. 7. For if we must give diligence, so to stir up ourselves ; it is not tho to stay, and be purely passive ; till such time as we are rapt even out of ourselves. And if *meditari* be, (as some derive it, *medio animo ire*) the going down into our own minds ; to hold a sort of communication with ourselves ; are we not put upon this very thing, by an exprefs command? Psal. iv. 4. " Commune with your own hearts." And would we but duly apply ourselves to it, such conference at home, should we find much more to avail us, than abundance of that chat with companies abroad ; which helps so many to forget themselves ; and to continue still some of the greatest strangers to their own souls. The amusements of the world, the entertainments of sense, and the hurry of company, are too well known for prevalent temptations ; and the common occasions of diverting men, from the principal affair that they have to do : which seldom shall we find better to be done, than when we are alone ; and have none but God, and our own souls to converse with. In such abstractions and sequestrations from society and business, from pleasures, and interruptions, we come best of all to know ourselves ; and here, (if ever) shall we be in earnest, to do all heartily as to the Lord.

The course then that I find most beneficial to myself, I am also for recommending it to others. And for such as have not better furniture of their own : or that find any thing agreeable in these preparations of mine ; I have gathered together the present entertainment, after another of the same nature : that any

any who please, may take out of this or that, what they shall think fit for their own purpose.

I must confess, that I see nothing, upon which I can value myself in either, but the pious intention : and neither, indeed, can be expected to prove of any good use : or to find any desirable success, without the divine benediction ; which blessing from on high, may the kind readers, therefore join with me, to pray down upon my poor endeavours, that they may not go off, without some kindly fruit, but turn to a happy account.

MEDITATIONS.

THE FIRST DECADE.

MEDITATION I.

Of the Lord's mercy in lengthening out my Life.

OF one that lives to a great age, and dies full of days, we use to say, He has held out long, and had a fair time in the world. And must not I thankfully acknowledge it, my soul, to the Lord; what length of days, and fair opportunities I have had, to make my observation and my benefit, of so many as I have seen, carried off from this land of the living before me? Some in a very surprising manner; and (as I may fear) in a miserably unprovided case, while I have been permitted, still to emerge out of all the troubles, and to survive all the dangers that threatened, long ere this time, to have hurried me away into another world.

O what is it, but the long-suffering of the Lord so to bear with such an injurious sinner? And what mercy from my God, that he makes me thus to differ? O what have I done so well; to deserve any of this favour? Yea, how much evil have I made bold to do; that might have provoked the offended Majesty, to cut me off in his just displeasure? Is it not mercy to be spared, and get such space to repent; and to make my peace above? Is it not mercy, still to have a further grant, of that precious time, which is the only time, that ever we shall have; wherein

to make ready for a whole eternity, and O who is able to tell, how highly they would prize this mercy, (might they but once more enjoy it) who now have lost it; and are for ever past it!

O may I so use the mercy, that it prove indeed a mercy, and kindness to thee, my soul! That I may not only have more time from the Lord to live longer, but also more grace from the Lord, to live better! For to have more days added to my present life, what will it, but add heavier weight to my future account, if I only have them, and mispend them; and will not, in the day, do the proper and needful work of the day?

'Tis a wish that favours more of some sensual disposition, than the fruit of any mature consideration, when such as mean me their greatest kindness, use to pray for my life; that I may continue many and many years; to enjoy the conveniencies and accommodations which I have here upon earth. When, alas, the longer I do enjoy them, the more shall I have to answer for them, if I live only to enjoy them. But when I am the same still; or worse, in my soul's estate this year, than I was the last; were it not better, I had died a year sooner than to live on, that I might grow a more wicked sinner?

O my soul! the chief of thy concern should be, what shall I do here, worth the time and the talents, wherewith my Lord is pleased to entrust me: What progress I shall make in my heavenly voyage still further. And what service I shall perform in my Christian warfare yet better. That this day may not find me as the last: nor the next come and go, and leave me still as bad. For to what purpose then is the price put into my hands, which I never use, to do me any good; but hang still a burden upon that mercy, which deals with me so bountifully?

Rouse up then, my soul, and not only observe the happy seasons that I have, but wiselier consider, how
I am

I am to bestir me, now while time serves me. O dread to let ever a day slip, without the doing of some good work, and making some addition still more to the spiritual stock. Be full of contrivance and care, my soul, that the next new day may always bring thee in some new advantage; to set thee clearer from thy sins; and to raise thee higher above this present world: to make thee bolder to meet with death; and better fitted for the blessed life; to strengthen thy interest above; and to render thee more great and intimate with thy God. And then wilt thou see a greater mercy, than bare life, in the lengthening out of thy time upon earth; when it brings thee into the better preparation for heaven: and at last, yet a much higher mercy than that: when he, in whose hands are thy times, shall give thee thy discharge, from waiting here any longer, as soon as thou art made meet, to live elsewhere, infinitely happier, and that for ever.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY gracious Lord, the God of my life! it is thy sweet and rich mercy, to thy poor creature, and unprofitable servant, that still I do see new days, and find new mercies every morning. Yea, thy wonderful patience it is, with a provoking sinner, that I had not long ago been put past the opportunity to enjoy any more of such abused mercy. O forgive me, Lord, all the time that I have lost, and wickedly misspent: and give me grace to improve the future to thy glory, and to the advantage of that soul, which thou wilt shortly require of me. That while I have opportunity, I may do all the good that’s within the reach of my ability; and so acquit me every day, that my last may be my best day: and my latter end peace, and my death, a safe passage out of this

Vol. II. B miserabile

to MEDITATIONS.

“miserable world: and a joyful entrance into the
“heavenly kingdom. Amen.”

MEDITATION II.

Of the Enjoyment of good Health.

O MY soul, how insipid, yea, how nauseous to me, would be my life, without that health, which is the savoury sauce to give it a pleasant relish; never should I love but lothe to live; must the life that I hold, be as the common butt, to receive all the arrows of acute diseases, and serve only to give me a poignant sense of the appendant pain and misery. Life, with such a heavy clog at its heels, with such a galling load, to bow down and break its back; would it not lose the name of a blessing, and look as if it were given only in judgment; when so plunged in the waves and billows of trouble still rolling over it? would not this disprove the devil's maxim; and make him to speak like himself, even in that, which uses to be counted a truth from the liar's mouth; that skin for skin, and all that a man has, he will give for his life? For who would pay so dear for his own torment, when he must but hang on, that he may still endure the more?

But O how much better has my indulgent Father provided for me, my soul! Blessed be his name, that such a bitter draught, and weeping mingled with my drink, has not been the portion of my cup: but my constitution healthy; and all so well with my body, as I cannot but take for a wonder, in the case of one, that has lived no more regular. When many are such strangers to health, and so acquainted with grief

grief; that they scarce know a well day; wherein they are not sore pressed, and go mourning even all the day long; yea, when they should lie down at night, and put off their load, are in dread then, even of their bed; because the place of rest uses to afford them little or none: when their appetite is gone, and no meat or drink delectable to their taste, or what they do desire, they cannot digest; but only swallow it to suffer for it: when their chamber's a shop of medicines; by which they are striving to live artfully, i. e. wretchedly, finding there, none but that sad relief, to protract the miseries of life: O how happily has my Lord made me to differ, that I see so many good days, and find so many good nights! that my stomach so seldom fails in its office, either of reception or concoction; that my meat and drink goes down pleasantly, and goes off easily: that my sleep is sweet, and my bed scarce ever deceives me of a comfortable repose, O what a mighty advantage have I here, my soul, of all the various sorts of plaintiffs, that are groaning out their wearisome days and nights under the sad oppression of their several ailments, aches, and maladies! what a price have I here, put into my hands, not to sacrifice to my flesh, but to lay out such a blessing, in the service of my Lord!

When I hear the smooth words of such as wish me long life, and good health, to enjoy what God has given me of the world's good: I accept the kind intention, but must correct their erroneous petition; which should be, that God would bless the blessing to me, and help me to make a good use of the good things bestowed upon me, and still, to do the more good, the more I have of good; and can I think the best of my time, too good for the God, whose goodness to me has been so abundant, even at all times? O my soul, this is the time, wherein to do his work: whoever do reckon sickness the only season

season for religion : I pity the mistaken notion : and cannot hope to see all well done, in such a bad condition ; when their service is like to be even as sickly as themselves. But now am I to be doing, when I have not only the opportunity, but ability, and when, O when so fit a time as this, to use the health, before it be gone ? yea, to double my diligence ; and now be so much the busier, because ere long, the hail temper will be broken, and I shall be locked up, and rendered unfit for any more business ? if the strong man is not to glory in his strength, whose foundation, even at best, is but in the dust ; O what do I know, but that I, who am so well and lusty to-day, may be utterly disabled to help myself to-morrow ? while health and strength then serve me, I must find them better work, than to serve my wantonness, or worldliness, my vices, or follies ; and in the greatest care must I be, that thou, my soul, mayest also share in the health, and be in prosperity, as well as my body. Else what will the easiness of my flesh prove, but the harvest of the devil ? and the better it is with me, it will be but the worse for me. As I am, therefore, aforehand with others, in being healthier ; O that I may be also holier ! else I cannot be healthy all over. For what is holiness but the health of the soul ; and then only canst thou do well, my soul ; and live like thyself, when healed of all thy deadly sins ; and made the faithful member of that kingdom, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** GOD of my life and health ! by whose favour I have, not only a subsistence in the world, but a comfortable enjoyment of my life, and a great measure of good health. It is thy sweet gift, Lord, and the chief of thy temporal blessings,

MEDITATIONS. 13

“ blessings, that gives relish and lustre to all the rest;
 “ O that I may be duly thankful for it, and bring
 “ thee glory, in the use of it ! Let me not trust to
 “ it, nor glory in it ; but carefully and industriously
 “ lay out and improve it, while I have it. That my
 “ soul also may be healthy, and that thou, Lord,
 “ who hast pleasure in my prosperity, mayest also be
 “ pleased with my duty, when I am strong in the
 “ Lord, and rejoice as a strong man to run a race,
 “ in doing the service acceptable to my God thro’
 “ Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION III.

Of God's goodness, in making affairs prosperous.

THAT things do succeed to my wishes ; yea,
 and above my expectations ; O my soul, shall
 I ascribe it to my subtile politicks, or to my strenu-
 ous endeavours, or to the interest and assistance
 of my good friends and kind neighbours ? Whatever
 share these might have in the conduct and execution,
 yet must I look still higher and further : when all,
 indeed, is owing to the kind providence, and the
 good will of my heavenly Father, who sends prosper-
 ity, and who gives every good gift. 'Tis he that
 has shewed his favour to me, and levelled the banks,
 and removed the rubs, to make my way plain and
 facile before me, and every thing bend and comply,
 to gratify and please me.

For how often, my soul, do I see much deeper
 wisdom, stronger ability, greater interest, and wider
 friendship, than any of mine, fail of producing such
 effects ? how often are the wise and potent, and such
 as are best befriended, yet baffled and defeated ? and
cannot

cannot forbear to complain and cry out, that nothing fadges ; but all goes cross with them ? and who more prosperous and unfortunate, than some that one would take to be the world's darlings ? and wonder, that all should not bow and stoop to their pleasure ?

But there is an invisible spring in the movement of second causes ; (too little observed) that steers the whole course ; and turns all to ends designed, by a mind and council far superior. The hand that fashions hearts, is the only hand that can secure events. And that hand has wrought for me ; and to that, my soul, I must render all the glory ; that affairs do succeed so well with me. For all had been blasted, if he had not blest it. But he, whose goodness I have lived upon all my days ; and whose mercy still I have experienced in every necessity ; he has now been nigh to me, and done great things for me ; and so commanded the operation and issue of things in my favour ; that instead of fretting at checks, and bewailing disappointments in my enterprize ; I am solacing my soul in the loving kindness of my God ; and find still renewed occasion, to tell how graciously he has wrought in my behalf.

This, this is thy sweet benignity, Lord of Love ! so kind thou art to one that deserves nothing less, than to be so well used. Thou does not only make, what thy Josephs do, to prosper : But such engagements as these, thou layest even upon a poor worthless sinful creature. 'Tis no reward of merit, that thou shouldest thus please even them that please thee : But O how amazing is the condescension of thy mercy, so to win those hearts to thyself ; that were wandering from thy ways, and little faithful to thy service ! such favour hast thou shewed to me a miserable sinner : To thy blessed name alone, my Lord, for ever be all the honour.

THE

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY Father, my Saviour, my Comforter !
 “ Thou hast not only sustained and preserved
 “ me, but also prospered and refreshed me, and
 “ made me full of gladness and delight, in all the
 “ success that thou hast given me, and all the favour
 “ that thou hast shewed me. I have tasted, how
 “ good the Lord is ; and O how largely experienced
 “ what abundant grace is still flowing down from
 “ my God. I did commit my way to thee, and
 “ trust in thee ; and what I would have, thou didst
 “ bring it to pass. Dear Lord ! thou even thou hast
 “ done it. I see, I own, I admire thy good hand in
 “ it. And shall I not extol and praise thee ? Shall I
 “ not love and please thee for it ? O that I may ever
 “ do it, as now I desire it ! And give me, I beseech
 “ thee, grace, and ability to do it sincerely, cheer-
 “ fully, joyfully, and eternally. Amen.”

 MEDITATION IV.

Of Godliness befriending us, even for this World.

THAT God's holy religion is the way to God's heavenly kingdom, who can call it in question ? But that it makes for us, in the life which now is, may there not be room for some scruple ? seeing the rule of our religion teacheth us to despise the world, and to forsake all for Christ : yea, lets us know, that all who will live godly in him, shall suffer persecution, and that we are to count the fiery trial no strange thing ; but esteem it good for us to be afflicted ;

afflicted ; and rejoice even in tribulation. And does not all this, my soul, look rather against us, than for us, in reference to our being here at present, whatever we may hope for hereafter? Yet let me not, from hence, take up any prejudice at my religion, as an enemy to my prosperous condition, and for exposing me to trouble and affliction. For crosses and sufferings I am to expect, whether I be a follower, or a deserter of the godly way : such evils of pain, being even the natural consequents of the evils of sin. And then, instead of resenting the unkindness, am not I rather to take it for a favour ; to sustain the smart here, instead of lying by it for ever? Thus crosses may do me the greatest courtesy, to wean me from this world ; to school me out of my sins, to send me home to my God, and set my heart upon the better, heavenly, everlasting good. Cannot he that lays it upon me, (with the greatest ease) thus over-rule that which is against me, to make for me; that what I lose one way, I may regain, in a much better? and when I am but faithful to him, I may depend upon his promise, that so well it shall succeed to me.

But however, in some times, and among some persons, I may fare the worse, for espousing his holy cause : yet, is it so always? or is it so every where? No, but the better I am, the better I shall pass among the best : and the better also shall I deserve from the rest, yea, and be a friend and blessing even to them that might like me better, if I were looser. O what in the world, like true religion, does make for my peace, for my health, and wealth, and for my advantage every way? Has not my Lord engaged himself, to take care of my maintenance, when I take care of his service? Let me but then set myself to glorify his name, and do his will ; and never doubt, but he will give me my daily bread, and all the fitting supplies of this life. For is not the addition of all other
ther

ther things assured to them that seek first his kingdom and its righteousness? Mat. vi. 33. And that there shall be no want to them that fear the Lord: no want of any good thing, Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10. i. e. Any good thing, that he knows to be good for them. And though all godly men ('tis true) have not the fulness of the world, yet will their heavenly Father raise friends and means, and find out ways and helps still to furnish them, with all that is needful, to carry them to their blessed journey's end.

Yea, righteousness has in it the tendency, to exalt them, even in this world. 'Tis such a thriving course, that makes them industrious and honest, and fit to be trusted; and also useful, and kind, and worthy to be esteemed, and loved, and favoured. And when that godliness, which has the "Promise" also of the life that now is," relates them to God, as his dear children, and peculiar charge; such an interest does it give them in his covenant, and his blessing, that he cannot fail to take a fatherly care of them; to provide sufficiently for them, and to approve himself particularly kind to them.

But dost thou not see, my soul, how usual it is, for wickedness to fret and waste away a good estate, and to bring the prodigal, (that runs out of God's blessing, into riotous living,) to want a piece of bread? And though ungodly men (for a while) may carry it, as lords of the earth, and have the world at will; abundance and superfluity of all things, to their wishes: yet O what a damping consideration is it, my soul, (had they hearts to lay it home) that they hold all, but by robbery, and pilfering from the great Lord of the world; who has made over all upon his children, (the coheirs with his Christ;) who believe and know the truth? and what have the wicked worldings then, but what they can snatch, with his frowns and vengeance? and how dearly must they pay, for all the sacrilegious rapine and

abuse of his creatures? Yea, so much as they have in possession, what will it, but (like a dead weight,) plunge them into the deeper damnation? and even at present, does it give them the ease and joy, that might be expected? No, but as Pharaoh's lean kine devoured the fat, and were never the fuller: so may a wealthy man have all that heart can wish, and be never the easier; but still like a great slave, in chains of gold; that (notwithstanding all the rich links, and fine locks, yet,) hold the wretch as fast, and pinch him as much, as if they were made of the coarsest metal. He may besot, and forget himself; but no owner is he of that at the bottom, which can ever make him satisfied and blessed.

For O what true content, without godliness, let a man be never so rich! and what true godliness, but it will bring content, let a man be never so poor! having the key put into his hands, to go into all the treasures of heaven, 'tis but ask and have, for the Lord bids him seek, and gives him the promise to find, if not the very things begged, yet as good or better, with the blessing of Heaven, upon that which he has of the fat of the earth. And thus is the best livelihood, indeed, got upon our knees; by those prayers, which do keep up the fair and happy intercourse, between us and the eternal Fountain of all good. And then, O what circumstances in the world can render him uneasy in his mind; who stands so well with the Lord! when pleasing unto him, I shall also find favour enough with men. And this boldness at the throne of grace, will either help me to all that I desire: or else, to satisfaction in that which I now enjoy. And then, having even what I would, how can I but be well pleased? And when so pleased, then may I set my heart at rest; and count myself even as happy as can be expected, in such a defective state, and such a vale of misery.

THE

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY God! give me so much of the world’s
 “ good, as thou knowest to be for my good.
 “ And make me truly godly : and then shall I not
 “ be uneasy, whether thou send prosperity or ad-
 “ versity. O let my soul be rich in thy grace, and
 “ prosper with the increase of God, and then shall
 “ all things turn and succeed to me for good : and
 “ thou wilt make even my enemies at peace with
 “ me ; or prevent their enmity for undoing me,
 “ and make the world to favour me, or bless me
 “ with a favour, that is infinitely better ; even
 “ thy own gracious favour, (O my God) in Jesus
 “ Christ our Lord. Amen.”

MEDITATION V.

On the sight of a wicked man’s noble Seat.

O MY soul! how fair and great is yonder man-
 sion! how rich and pompous all within it!
 how neat and sweet all about it! the house looks
 like a royal court: the out-buildings represent a
 beautiful town, and had an ordinary man but the
 very stable, he would count it a palace. The folds
 and stalls, the gardens and orchards, the walks and
 houses of pleasure, the groves and ponds, the park
 and warren, the fruitful fields and fat pastures, alto-
 gether, what a delightful prospect do they yield to
 the beholder? What a plentiful provision to the pos-
 sessor? in which he has all that this world can give,
 and wants nothing for the present life. At home he
 lies

lies soft, goes fine, fares high, and enjoys a sovereign command, all waiting upon him, and studying to please him. And abroad, he moves in ease and state; the chariot and train of attendants, ready to receive him: and the spectators, (as he passes along) standing to admire him. My soul, how much is this condition envied and applauded in the world, as if no greater happiness to be found! But yet, to me, the prospect gives a horror, together with the pleasure, when I cannot get Dives out of my mind; nor must I cast God's word behind my back, which declares the doleful issue of the wicked's prosperity. All this while, I find something, and that the main thing, lacking; God's holy fear, and his heavenly grace in the heart, to cure the deadly disease of the soul, and to make the great man, yet a better man; rich towards God, and as well provided for another world.

For (*nemo malus felix*,) even the heathens, (with good reason) could pronounce: no wicked man can be a happy man. When even the wickedness harboured in his bosom, is his very worst enemy; to which he gives all the fair opportunity. And his allowed lusts and rampant passions, are those hounds and vultures, that are even continually preying upon him; and like to eat up and devour him. And when his house is a house known more for riot and disorders; than for any care of religion and prayers, and is not so much at God's service, as the devil's; a seminary of all vice and debauchery: but no harbour of any true goodness and piety, he has then consulted, not only shame, but ruin to his house. For the infection of his wickedness is run into the very building; the flying roll, Zech. v. 1, 4. enters into the house, and the curse there remains in the midst: to consume it, with the timber and the stones of it. Thus all the finery is tarnished, and his blessings accursed. Yea, the fair edifice becomes even a habitation

habitation of dragons: when there lie the seed of the serpent, hissing and spitting their venom at God himself, and at that holiness which is his darling, and his soul's delight. Nay, there they do keep garrison, for God's everlasting enemy; and make one of the strong holds of Satan; from whence to let fly at heaven; and to defend themselves in all their insolent outrage, at the glorious Majesty, that there inhabits. And all his kindness and bounty is thus turned into a magazine; to maintain and corroborate the hostility. And this is their school of good breeding; where he, whom they all still live upon, is even played upon: and the blessed Founder, that gives them all the abundance, nothing but blasphemed, and set at defiance.

Dost thou then, my soul, look invidiously upon the splendor and gallantry? does their height strike thee down; and their jollity make thee heavy? I must confess I am heavy: not to see the blaze they make; but to think, in what a doleful manner, all will shortly be extinct. That they have their good things, in their life time, troubles not my head, but that they should provoke God, to cast them out thence, to be tormented in the eternal flames, pierces my heart. I read, Luke xvi. of a certain rich man, that so quickly changed his dwelling, from the place, where he went in gay clothing, and was pampered with high feeding, to lie in that fire; where he, that would not part with his crumbs, to stop the beggar's mouth, cried out in vain, for a drop to cool his own tongue. And the Lord knows, how little may be between him, and that doom; who now swims in all the fulness, and flourishes in all the pomp of this world. O how soon does an accident stop his breath, or a disease come, and throw him down into the vaults of death, and then is the scene so extremely changed; that he who had all, is for ever out of all. And nothing goes after him: nothing about him, but what serves to torment him.

I do

I do not disturb myself at the grandeur, the splendor, or curiosity, about such houses, as want not that best ornament, of the owner's virtue, and charity, grace, and piety : the houses where God is pleased to dwell : and where his holy fear, and his serious worship have still the preference, above all structures, goods and entertainments ; where pride and profaneness do not devour God's part ; nor luxury or avarice rob the poor of their's. Nothing do I count too much, or too great ; nothing too rich, or too neat, for such as know how to use the cost, and delicacy, and bravery ; as helps and encouragements in their journey, to a better country ; and to a far more surpassing glory. Upon such a sweet place, (the religious house,) I look with more than ordinary delight ; even, as a little map of heaven : and cannot but pronounce, Peace to that house, and pray for the continuance and increase of all God's blessings upon it. But the great house, that is thought too great, to be a house of prayer ; and so full of somewhat else ; that God's religion or his poor, can find there no room nor welcome ; such a house, as serves but to cover God's scornful foe, and to shelter an ungodly rebel, it is not so much my eye-sore, but it is like to be a worse stumbling-block to the owner.

O my soul, never envy the biggest man upon earth, that is no better provided. But if the Lord will suffer even some of his worst enemies, so to flourish here with his bounty : think then, (to the utmost height, that ever thou art able to think ;) what incomparably better things, (worthy of God,) he has prepared, for the entertainment of his dear children, in the most glorious house, and everlasting kingdom of their Father. O may I but have the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; and a blessed mansion there above : and then take who will, the decaying-

laying piles upon earth, and all the stateliest houses in the world.

THE PRAYER.

“**D**ELIVER my soul, O Lord, from men of
 “ the world, who have their portion in this
 “ life : and let me not fall a prey to them, nor have
 “ my lot with them, nor fret and repine at them.
 “ But let me dwell in the secret place of the Most
 “ High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty ; and be of one of the household of God. Yea,
 “ may I be a door-keeper in the house of my God,
 “ rather than dwell in the tents of wickedness. O
 “ let me not look with a languishing eye upon any
 “ the great things of this vain world, that passeth
 “ away : but admire the glorious mansions of thy
 “ kingdom ; and at last, find a room in those everlasting habitations ; through the merits of the blessed Purchaser, my only Redeemer. Amen.”

MEDITATION VI.

Of the World's insufficiency to make one Happy.

HOW apt are we, my soul, to look with admiration upon the rich, and great ones of this world ; as if, who but they, for happy men ; that have the fulness of all things which earth affords, to give them content and pleasure ? when we see the mighty fabricks, the sumptuous piles of building, and all the wealthy stores, within and without, the sweet parterres, and rank olitories ; the laden trees, mural and standard ; the woods and waters ; the flourishing

flourishing fields, and rich grounds, all stocked and furnished with the best to be had, of every kind: surely, then, do we think with ourselves, peace must needs dwell here, and this can be no other but the seat of happiness. But is not this the judgment of mere sense; while reason stands aside? for, as he who hath more than he needs or uses, is not really, (but only in fancy,) the better for it; so all this specious appearance, depends it not upon our mistake and folly, when from so vain a shew and shadow, we take our measures, to conclude of welfare and felicity? for, alas, what sovereign virtue have any of these ingredients in them, either to prolong, or to felicitify the life of man? And how can they ever give the life and bliss, which themselves have not? The fire that heats us, must be hot itself: the sun that enlightens us, is the fountain of light. So if these things of the world can indeed add length and happiness to our lives; they must then have that life and blessedness in themselves; and a power also to communicate the same to others. But where, alas, is any such power, but only in his hands, who is the God blessed for ever? That they cannot hold the soul in life, is notorious, from all the examples of so many rich and great men, often hurried out of the world by death, even in the midst of their days, and their wealth. Was not the soul of that mighty possessor, Luke xii. 19, 20. required of him, the very night, after he had been applauding himself, in the much goods laid up for many years? O what cost would be spared, to save his endangered life; who has money and treasure in all abundance? as well as ever he might love it, yet he would not die, to save it. No, but when he is just to be torn away from the world, like a limb from the body; then all that he has, would he think very cheap, to give for his life. Yet then, all will not do: no, the coin will not pass, to redeem him from the grave: the refuge, of which he had the highest

highest thoughts, fails him : and all his pounds, in that extremity, are but cyphers to him ; and then signify nothing, but only to vex and torment him ; because they lye by, and cannot at all avail him, after all the mighty expectation from them.

And as for that happiness, on the account of which alone, life is worth the having ; our Lord has assured us, that it consists not in the abundance of those things which a man possesseth, Luke xii. 15. For nothing may he want, that the world can give him, and yet be still but a very miserable man : not only miserable, for his soul's estate, towards God, (as so many worldlings, that have all their good things here, and nothing but the heavy reckoning, to expect hereafter,) but also, for the felicity, (such as it is,) attainable in the present life ; which is commonly the furthest from those, who seem to have every thing requisite to make it up. And when they are envied by those below them ; as such, who have engrossed in their hands, all that is ever to be desired ; yet it cannot keep off diseases, and disasters from them ; nor quiet the lusts and passions, the discontents and tumults, that work and rage within them. And it is not, indeed, what a man has without, but what he has within ; that must give him the true comfort of his life. For as long as his mind is sick, and guilty, and uneasy ; he is upon a rack, though thought to be in a paradise. And so very nice a thing, is this worldly felicity ; that even the smallest matter in the world, sometimes can mar it all. As in the case of Haman, who, though advanced above all the princes ; and graced with as many favours, as the greatest potentate on earth could heap upon him ; yet for want of the cap and cringe of a poor Jew, he declared, that all nothing availed him. Esth. v. 13. And, in the case of Ahab ; that had all the kingdom of Israel, to content him : yet takes his bed, ready to die with vexation ; because Naboth

would not pleasure him with his little vineyard, 1 Kings xxi. 4. Thus many that have the biggest effects in this tumultuous world, have most of the disturbance; and the least share of its comfortable enjoyment. He that is greedy of gain, does but trouble his own house, Prov. xv. 27. To fill his house with the world's good, he empties himself of hearts-ease. There's the hurry and drudgery of getting; where, often, there is very small pleasure of enjoying, but all the bustle of the world, and no rest to the soul.

And is it any better, my soul, with the voluptuous epicure; who in his extravagant methods, of pleasing his flesh, does but help to ruin that very pleasure, which is his only end? to break his rest and ease, and render his life a clog, and himself a scorn: and get nothing that stays by him; but frustration and shame, and remorse, and smart; and too-late wishes, that he had been wiser, and taken the course to be happier.

Such is the world's happiness, and a portion in this life. O my soul! instead of gaping and ranging after it; be shy and afraid of it: and seek out further, after things abundantly better, beyond and above it: such things, as shall make thee at the bottom easy, and for ever happy.

THE PRAYER.

“ O MY supreme good, my only satisfying and
 “ everlasting portion! how often have I abus-
 “ ed and befooled my soul, in seeking for happiness,
 “ where was nothing but disappointment to be
 “ found? I am ashamed of the vain attempts and sil-
 “ ly adventures that I have made. I come, Lord, to
 “ thee; and beg to be pardoned and received by
 “ thee. O discover to me, in thy blessed self, all
 “ that is good for me; that I may go no further, to
 look

“ look for my happiness out of thee. But there
 “ may I set up my rest, in thee; and never let the
 “ world, (in any of its tempting representati-
 “ ons,) interpose, to part me from thee; who art
 “ my life and my bliss, and my all; not only for
 “ some little while, but for the felicity, that shall en-
 “ dure to all eternity. Amen.”

MEDITATION VII.

Of trusting in the arm of Flesh.

O MY soul! must I not put my trust in princes, or in any son of man? No, I must not, I cannot: but I shall dishonour him that forbids it, and shall consult shame and mischief to myself, in doing it. For thus do I give away the praise of God, to my idols; and set them up for his rivals, leaving him but the title and the name; while they have my hope, and my heart. As if he were inferior to the creature; and nothing in him to be so much reckoned upon; as what I have, that looks on my side in the world. And thus do I lean upon the supports, that have no help in them; none of the help that I need from them; even while I have them: and yet such as they are, I shall, ere long, (for certain,) be utterly deprived of them.

Be the men upon whom I have my eyes, never so wise and great, and good; yea, never so much my friends: yet which of the deep heads, with whom I am so bold to trust myself, (as being confident, that still they know what they have to do,) can penetrate to the bottom of those future contingencies; which God has laid up in the secrets of his own council? and what frequent turns of an over-ruling providence,

dence, on a sudden, do intervene, to alter the face of things ; and break all the measures, even of such as have the longest reach ?

Yea, the very biggest of men, who are in power and authority, and rise so high above the rest, as the mountains, and shields, and gods of the earth ; and bear the mighty stroke and sway here in the world ; even to turn the balances of kingdoms ; and have so many at command under them, and even all standing in awe of them : yet what can they do for us at the most, but screen us from some enemies, or advance us to some dignities ? and not always so much as that neither. For there are enemies, and those the worst of all, (sin and sickness, death and the judgments of God ;) from which they can neither preserve us, nor themselves. And even from the other common enemies ; princes have as much need of our defence, as we have of theirs ; and must hang upon their subjects, to be their helpers. Nor can they oblige all their friends, would they never so fain : but some of them must take up with kind words ; instead of wealth and honour. And even such as they do prefer to places ; yet they cannot give them grace, and peace, and good qualities : they cannot make them good men, or happy men : unless they could new make them, as well as advance them : unless they could give them new hearts, and new spirits ; as well as new titles and possessions : which is a creation, that no king, but only the King of heaven, must ever pretend to. The very defenders of our faith and religion, cannot give us the faith and religion available to salvation.

But the temptation, my soul, rises yet higher, to trust in men, when they are very good, as well as wise and great men. For if any in the world are fit to be relied on, sure they are the favourites of heaven ; and such as are great with God, and have the biggest interest above ; to befriend us at the throne of
grace

grace. Yet, as the Lord putteth no trust in his saints, whom he knows to be frail creatures; not without their blemishes: so may we trust to them, and be deceived by them. They may promise to pray for us, and forget us; or make but a slight mention of us. Yea, they may in earnest intercede for us; and yet find those cases; in which even Noah, Daniel and Job, shall not be heard, but for themselves. And, alas, who can pray them into heaven; that will run on, in the very way to hell? even God's dear ones, have enough to do, (with fear and trembling,) to work out their own salvation. The grace that brought them to glory, will not make a bridge, to carry us thither. No, their goodness will do us no good, but leave us the more to answer; if it made us never the better.

And, what though I have friends, so dear, and affectionately inclined to my interests; that I dare put, not only my secrets, but my life, and all that ever I have in the world, into their hands. These are blessings, indeed, thankfully to be owned: but not ultimately to be trusted. No, for in my greatest needs they may fail me: and not only for want of power, but of will, to do for me. They may be otherwise engaged; or alienated from me, yea, turned against me. Or they may utter the expressions of kindness to me, and shake their heads, and wring their hands, and shed their tears over me: and yet be out of all capacity, to do what I want for me: and prove physicians of no value, yea, altogether vanity. O then how shall I be deceived, to my cost and sorrow, when I will hang upon straws, and make me bridges of rotten sticks; and raise up a mighty pile of high expectation, on the breath of a man, which is blown out in a moment: and he returns to his earth, and in that very day all his thoughts perish. And all is then quite at an end, which I made account of, from that quarter.

Now

Now here, my soul, let me beware, not only of trusting to that which will deceive me ; but also of that self-deceit to talk of trusting in nothing but God, when he knows it to be no such matter. For whatever I do pretend, that is really my trust, to which I think of betaking myself, when pursued with foes and fears ; as the hunted beast runs to his den : and where I reckon of safety and relief, when driven with danger, and put to my shifts. And if from hence grows my boldness, that I am so provided, underlined, or befriended in the world ; and that I have such names and numbers on my side, to help me out in every strait and pinch : this then is my trust : and such trust is my sin ; and like to be my snare. O let me take off my eyes from men, and means, to look through them, and above them ; further than the ends of the earth, where alone my help is to be found. For it is not in man, in any man ; or in any thing, that this world can afford : no, but the arm of the Lord is my strong and sure defence : the shadow of his wings is my sole security ; and God himself my refuge and strength, and present help, in every time of need and trouble.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** THE hope of Israel, and the hope of all
 “ the ends of the earth ! to whom, but unto
 “ thee, should I seek for my relief, and all desired
 “ good ? and where but with thee, can I ever be safe,
 “ and easy and happy ? whithersoever else I do be-
 “ take myself, it will be to my infinite damage and
 “ loss. For my only help is in the name of the
 “ Lord, that made heaven and earth. O take me off
 “ all carnal confidences, and all worldly dependen-
 “ cies ; to trust in thy name, O Lord, and stay my-
 “ self upon my God : that I may cease from man,
 “ whose breath is in his nostrils ; and still make the
 “ shadow of thy wings my refuge : and so thou
 mayest

“ mayest take care of me, relying upon thee ; and
“ save me, because I put my trust in thee ; through
“ the merits of thy dear Son, my blessed Saviour.
“ Amen.”

MEDITATION VIII.

Of the great danger that lies in the World's Fulness.

O MY soul! who is not for getting even all that ever he can of the world? but how few that have the fulness of all things, are sensible of their danger from hence, or in any care to prevent it; that their getting of all here, may not turn to the spoiling of all with them for ever? but whether or not they see it, and fear it, yet nevertheless is the peril; both from the cumber, and from the pleasure of what they enjoy here in the world. So much to do is there in the very management: that O how many does it even swallow up; to keep their accounts, to receive their incomes, to get in their debts, and set out again; so as to secure and improve what they have got: that they may not decline, but thrive, in the temporal estate? this they take for calling enough; and dear employment, in which they are glad to plunge themselves; and to make it the excuse for their sloth and trifling in the affairs of their souls. Let the spiritual case be never so forlorn and desperate; they have somewhat else to do, than look after that. So are they amused and lost in the world; that they have no ears to regard the Saviour, who calls them to hear his voice, and to follow his ways. They cannot a while to be saved: when such important matters lie on their hands; that Mammon calls, and the flesh craves: and they must live, and be great themselves: and provide

provide for I know not whom, nor they neither : according to that observation of old, (and as much reason for it still, Psal. xxxix. 6.) he heapeth up riches, and knows not who shall gather them. Yet on he drives ; and this is the main, and the all, that he cares for. His hands are full, and his head is full : 'till no room remains, for any thing else to be done, or thought of. Thus he falls into temptation and a snare, and all the foolish and hurtful lusts, that pull on his destruction. Though all this while, he is called the careful man, and a good husband ; and much commended, for the wisdom of advancing himself and raising his family.

But whatever I may have of the world, O my soul, never let me make such a mighty matter of it : when I cannot but know, how much bigger concerns I have to secure, what a spurt is this present life ; how soon all that ever I hold here, will be out of my hands, and that God sent me not hither, to sit counting and hatching over a little pelf : but to number my days, and provide for my soul ; and to make sure of a lasting inheritance, to live upon, where I must abide for ever.

But now, can I suppose there is any pleasure to be found in that unweildy lumber, which gives so much trouble to attend and manage it ? Sure it is a troublesome pleasure, as well as a pleasing trouble : and yet, so far do men of the world count the pleasure, to preponderate the trouble ; that they are extremely fond of it, and even bewitched with it. O how do they value themselves upon what they have, and think they have authority to lay it on ; and be proud and luxurious, and as excessive as they please ; because they have enough, and spend but their own ? and then, who shall call them to account ? nay, it is well, if it come not to that insolence against the great giver of all, who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice. Well, if religion be not kicked out of doors, as the troubler of their house, that will not
let

let them alone, to do what they list; be they never so outrageous in their manners, and insufferable among their neighbours, yet the worldly sufficiency, that must answer for all; and give them licence, to be so naught, because they are so rich.

O my soul, how loud does this call, to alarm thy care, that what God has given me of the world's good, prove not such a dead weight, to pull me from him; and pin me down to the earth! that it lie not as the great barricade, to stop me out of heaven. O let me not think, I have liberty to be less godly, because I am more wealthy: but rather count myself obliged, to be beforehand with others in his holy service, who set me aforehand with them, by his bountiful favours; to exalt his name, and promote his religion, as he has raised my fortune, and bettered my condition. O shall I be so base, to set him at naught, that has set me up? shall I be more careless of my soul; because he has so plentifully provided for my body? and when he has fed me to the full, shall I wax wanton; and so mind the pleasing of my flesh; as not to think of pleasing the Lord? O God forbid! and give me grace, to make myself as remarkable for a godly life; as the Lord has made me remarkable for worldly wealth. And let none outdo me for another world; who outdo so many for this world. O let me be set upon doing good, while I have time for it; and be the quicker, as my time is the shorter. Whatever I have of the world, let me take it as the trial of my gratitude, and fidelity to the Lord; whether I will use it for him, or against him; to make me the looser and the worse; or the holier and better towards him. And may this still be my care and endeavour, so to order it; not that the world may now call me a substantial, wealthy man: but that the Lord, at last, may say to me, well done good and faithful servant.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** GOD be merciful to me ; and deliver me
 “ from the way and from the end of the men
 “ of this world. Let me not make it the business
 “ of my life, to make provision for the flesh ; to se-
 “ cure and increase my worldly effects ; and to get
 “ in, and lay out, what makes for my lucre or plea-
 “ sure, as if I had nothing else to do upon earth, but
 “ only to gather wealth ; or to spend it on my lusts.
 “ But keep me, Lord, in thy fear and love ; and in
 “ continual care, that I be not overwhelmed and
 “ lost, in the midst of all my stores. And when I
 “ abound in the world’s good, O make me also to
 “ abound in good works, and in the better service
 “ to my God. And let nothing in this world ever
 “ please me so much, as to be pleasing in thy sight,
 “ through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

 MEDITATION IX.

Of the great things which God has done for me.

I WILL not engage in a task impossible ; to enu-
 merate and celebrate every good gift, and par-
 ticular kindness, for which I am the Lord’s debtor.
 For who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord ; or
 shew forth all his praise ? Psal. cvi. 2. So many are
 his wonderful works that he has done, and his
 thoughts which are to us-ward ; that they cannot
 be reckoned up in order to him. If I would declare
 and speak of them, they are more than can be num-
 bered, Psal. xl. 5. But where I cannot undertake to
 cast

cast up the whole account ; nor am able to travel through every passage, in such a world of mercies : yet would I go as far as my present thoughts, (in this narrow compass,) will carry me, to make a few notes upon some remarkable particulars, like the specks and cyphers, and diminutive figures in maps ; that stand for castles, woods, and towns, and great cities. But O how many, (my soul,) must I leave to be supposed, that are here unmentioned ! where I reserve to myself, what belongs to my calling ; and am not here to meddle with the peculiar circumstances of my life : (which are a fair and spacious field, wherein to entertain my private meditation :) but only to recite, what lies in common to me ; with the whole generation of God's children throughout the world.

To begin then at the beginning ; my very being here, how much more is it than was owed me ? And if I had slept for ever in my first nothing, what wrong had been done me ? but O how much more am I a debtor ; when I am not barely the Lord's creature : (as are even the worst and vilest,) but superior to all the rest in the world about me ; a creature capable of knowing him that made me ; of loving and adoring him here, and of seeing and enjoying him for ever ? that I have a body, fearfully and wonderfully made, not crawling along the ground, but erect and pointing at heaven : and a soul, that raises me almost to an equality with the angels of God ; fit to wait upon the King of Heaven ; to find dear communion with him ; and to receive the highest favours from him : O how much has he done for me ; after his own blessed image, so to make me !

And that he still holds my soul in that life, for which a man will give all that he has, when so nice and curious is the vital clock-work ; depending upon so many minute requisites, to keep it in due frame

frame and motion: and when so often ventured and endangered, by my own disorder and extravagance; O how much to be admired is the mercy, that extends it to such a length! and that I had not long ago expired, by a hundred casualties, which have taken off such multitudes! yea, that God should not only preserve the frail creature; but endure the grievous sinner! when he has been so highly provoked by me; that he should forbear to destroy me, when so many have been sent to hell, in my time, for ought I know; that deserved no more than me, to be there! O who would nourish and cherish the wicked enemy, lying at his mercy? no man would so do it. But he that is God, and not man, has done it; and still goes on to do it. Admire then, my soul, and adore, and magnify the patience of God: that I have not been cut off in any of my provoking sins, and that I am not now bewailing thee, for lost, in remediless pains.

But the Lord's mercies to me lie not all in such negative; nor does he only bear with me, and keep off deserved evils from me, but so kind and indulgent is he to me, as to make all well and easy about me, and things to succeed commonly to my wishes, and not unoften above them: and still remembers and regards me, who so much do forget and despise him: yea, uses me like the dearest friend, who have carried towards him, even as the worst enemy.

And though at any time, he bring me low in the world: yet if withal he gives me but a contented mind, and sweet satisfaction in my poor condition: even thus then, has the Lord done more for me; than for many of the richest and greatest above me; and given me somewhat better, than all their wealth and height. Yea, though he sends a cross upon me, and turns it for good unto me, how much better then has he done by me; to rouse me out of my sins, and scare me off the way to hell; than if he
had

had let me alone, to run on smoothly, upon endless misery! O then, how greatly am I beholden to him, for the profit of that chastisement, which made me well, by making me ill, and cured my soul of worse distempers, than any that ailed my body!

Have I health and peace; credit and liberty; plenty and variety, friends and favourers, new mercies daily; fresh blessings continually? O how marvellous is all this in my eyes; when I know myself to be less than the least of all God's mercies! but here am I oppressed with the multitude, and how sweet soever be the reckoning, yet must I let innumerable blessings pass untold, where there is no ending.

But that which takes in all, redeeming love, I must ever admire and extol above all. O what has the gracious God done for me, in giving his Son; and with him, all things to me! his Son, to take not only my nature, but my sins, and my sorrows upon him, is an unspeakable and everlasting obligation laid upon me. To have the word of salvation sent to me; and the way of salvation set open before me: and after the forfeiture of my bliss, to be put again in such a hopeful case; that I shall not perish, unless I will desperately throw myself away; yea, not only to be called outwardly, by the preaching of his gospel; but inwardly too, by the working of his Spirit: to have my eyes opened, to see my sin and ruin, out of Christ; and to see my help and salvation in his hands: to have my heart turned from the old bent and way; from the reign of lust, and love of the world; to live godly in Christ Jesus, and seek the things above, to be made a convert, a believer, and (by regenerating grace,) a new creature: here, O here, are great things indeed, of the Lord's doing; the greatest of all, on this side heaven, that ever can be done; but only, to increase in me, the saving grace bestowed upon me. This is more than all the world could

could do for me : and that, without which the very best fruitions in the world, would signify nothing to me.

O my soul, let not all the kindness now be thrown away, upon a stupid wretch : but know thy friend, and consider what thou hast received ; and how much thou art obliged. Never let me spurn at my blessed owner, and bountiful provider : lest it prove sad to me, that ever so well he used me. But may I shew the ingenuity and good manners, of one that carries as a dear child, to the best of fathers. O let me conclude and resolve with myself, that he who has been so kind to me, and done such great things for me, shall be my God ; and I will love him, and serve him, and bless him, and praise him, and joy in him, and live to him, all my days, and with all my powers.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND what shall I render to thee, O Lord, for
 “ all thy benefits ! I can but acknowledge them,
 “ and admire them. For there is nothing that I
 “ can give or do, in any way of recompence for
 “ them. O the mercies, the patience, the preserva-
 “ tions, the deliverances, the supplies, the blessings,
 “ the comforts ; the favour, the kindness, that I
 “ have found ! O the goodness, and the love ! my
 “ life has been filled with it : I stand amazed at it.
 “ My God, give me an affecting, grateful sense of
 “ it : and make it a powerful and continual obliga-
 “ tion upon my heart, to carry in all becoming du-
 “ ty, and cheerful pleasingness to the Lord of love,
 “ all the days of my life. Amen.”

MEDI-

MEDITATION X.

Of the obligation to duty, from the sense of Mercy.

THAT such as fare well, should carry well; and know, and love, and regard, and please the friend, on whose kindness they live; all do expect it from them; and when they do otherwise, even the world will cry out of them. And much more reason has the Lord to resent (as he does, Isa. i. 2. and Jer. v. 24.) the baseness of such, as take no notice of his kindness; but turn it all to the encouragement of them in their wickedness. When no good done to them, does any good upon them, when he feeds and fills them with the best; and they are never the better for it, but the worse. He that sends all is no more regarded, than if he had done nothing, nor thought worthy to be acknowledged; let them be never so well used. So that they have it, what do they care, to whom they are beholden for it? Nay, while they enjoy the comfort, they seem afraid lest God should receive the honour, and so they make themselves worse beasts, even than the natural; when they know so much better, and yet live, as if they did not understand, who were their maker and maintainer. Justly might one look for mighty matters from them: when so largely they are trusted, so well they are paid, and so much they abound in all good things, that they should be full of service, and zeal, and love to God, and abound in the work of the Lord. But alas, who does less? And who more scornful despisers of God's holy worship? More and better service shall he have, from the poorest wretch, than from them. Nay, it is well,

well, if they be not the more wicked, the more they are obliged : and if all the favour do not serve, only to enrage the ungodly humour : and the wanton beasts, in fat pastures, will know no yoke, but do their own pleasure, and throw up the heels at their kind keeper. When they have the world at will, and all round them smiling upon them, then what should they make themselves sad, to think of God, and another world? What should they do but take their liberty, and enjoy their pleasure, and lay out that strength in the works of the devil, which they receive from the good creatures of God ! Thus paying their thanks to him, by running into all the filthy pranks, abominable to him, and perverting the very indulgence and bounty of heaven, into weapons against the Lord, and rods for their own backs.

O my soul ! if others will so barbarously abuse the loving-kindness of the Lord, let me ever abhor the base wickedness, and dread to be found in such scandalous guilt. Never let me so requite, nor tempt the Lord my God : least I provoke him, to turn me out of all ; and come to curse the time, that ever I had such plenty and comfort, when I knew no better how to use it ; but like a rapier or sword, put into a madman's hand, to dispatch and ruin myself with it. But when a price is put into my hands, O let my head be working day and night, how to steward and expend it, so as God may be pleased and glorified with it : and that I may find, at last, a good and comfortable account of it.

Lay to heart, my soul, how good is my God, and remember, that I do not serve the Lord for nought : but every way has he engaged me ; to do all that I am able, to approve myself thankful to him, and to perform the service, that shall be well taken by him. I am bound by his mercies, as well as by his commands, not only in strict duty, but in all grateful ingenuity. And his goodness, (that, even that) shall lead

lead me to repentance, and not only his terrors drive me to it. His love shall constrain me, and be a greater force upon me, than all the denunciations of judgment against me. O may I be thus sweetly won, and effectually overcome; so caught, in the pleasing snares of his endearing benefits; and so tied and bound to him, by the very heart, that nothing may be so much my care, as to bring him honour; and nothing so greatly please me, as to do his pleasure: that all my life may be a life of love; and every thing I do, go off sweetly with me, and be done cheerfully by me; as the dearly beloved, and highly obliged of the Lord.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY GOD, infinitely good! how plenteous
 “ is thy mercy, which thou hast poured out
 “ upon me, so abundantly! How wonderful is the
 “ kindness, which thou hast shewed me? Rich are
 “ the blessings of this life, which thou hast given
 “ me: but, O how much better, those of the life
 “ to come; such as this world has not for me:
 “ such as the world cannot take from me! O make
 “ and keep me, Lord, duly apprehensive of the
 “ engagements thy love has laid upon me; and
 “ conscientiously careful, to employ and improve
 “ all the gifts of thy bounty, to the ends of thy
 “ glory. Give me, I beseech thee, a sensible mind;
 “ to see and own thy good hand, in all that ever I
 “ have to enjoy: and give me a thankful heart, to
 “ admire thy grace, and bless thy name; and with
 “ all my soul, to love and praise, and serve and
 “ please my God, from whom I have every blessing
 “ and mercy; and to whom, for ever, be all the
 “ praise and glory. Amen.”

 THE SECOND DECAD.

MEDITATION XI.

Of the unchangeableness of God.

THOUGH all the creatures, that I see here on earth, are in perpetual flux : and how little do any of them stand at a stay ? But what they were a while since, they are not now : and what they are now, they will quickly cease to be the same : so that nothing but mutability in the creature ; yet no such thing as this, in their glorious Maker. No, but when heaven and earth are both liable to changing and perishing ; still he is the same, and his years shall have no end, Psal. cii. 27. With him is no variableness nor shadow of turning, James i. 17. The eternal root of all being, is himself above all the vicissitudes, incident to every thing else : and from everlasting to everlasting, able always to say, I AM. Could he ever be changed at all ; it must be either by others, or by himself : by others, it cannot be ; because he is not in the power of any : for how can the thing made, have any power over him that made it ? Neither can he be changed by himself : for if so, it must be either for the worse, or the better : for the worse, it cannot be ; for then must he cease to be the most perfect being ; *i. e.* cease to be God. Nor can he change for the better ; for
how

how can he ever be better, who is already absolutely the best? Never can he amend his state, who still enjoys, in himself, all blessedness compleat.

In the very incarnation of the Son of God, which bore the greatest semblance of a change; 'twas but one and the same God still, in another manner discovered to the world. Nor does his repenting, mentioned in Holy Scripture, denote any alteration or passion in God: no; but only, that he does the things sometimes, which appear to us, like the actions of one changing his mind. As when he determined to destroy man so lately made; he did, like one repenting of his doing a thing, by undoing it. Though the change was not really in God, but in the world, grown so wicked, and fit to be destroyed. And so, when he confers not the blessing promised; nor inflicts the judgment threatened; 'tis because that promise, and that threat were made with some reserve, either implied or expressed; and then men neglecting the condition, fail of the blessing: or else performing it, escape the punishment. And in sparing the penitent, and in punishing the obstinate, the Lord is still like himself; and never deviates from the tenor of his own holy Word.

When therefore, I strive with God in prayer, my soul; it is not to turn him; but to work myself into a disposition, meet to receive what I need from him: not to alter his will; but to bring about my salvation, according to his will. As I sit in the boat, and pull the rope, which fastens it to the shore; and may seem thus to draw the bank to me; when it is only the boat indeed, that I hale to land. So is God's changing, never but in appearance; and still it is ours alone, in truth. For he ever does all that he means; and keeps sure to his everlasting purpose.

Hear

Hear then, my soul; see where it is, that the good security, so much talked of, lies : and where alone I can be safe and sure. For, O how does it spoil the comfort of any enjoyment ; when we have no assurance, and know not how soon we may be turned out of it ? And what, alas, can we be sure of in this world, but only to be crossed and disappointed ? When all is changing ; and we ourselves hastening to our great change, and in a moment gone, and our place here no more to be found. But hear, my never-dying soul, that art for a never-ending portion, thou mayest find the sure-footing, upon that rock of ages, which will bear thee up from sinking : the unchangeable God, which will be thy God ; not only till death, but for and ever. For the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, and his heart is ever the same, though his face appear not always alike. The hills shall be removed, before the covenant of his peace ; seeing that covenant is an everlasting covenant ; and all that are within it, he betrothes to him for ever, Hos. ii. 19. Notwithstanding all my frailty then, yet will I take comfort in his immutability. Where I dare not trust to myself, yet will I build upon his goodness and promise, who will never suffer his faithfulness to fail ; and herein take courage and comfort, that I am in his blessed hands, who changeth not ; but will make all other changes in the world co-operate for the good of them that are changed by his grace, to speed them on to his glory.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Eternal JEHOVAH, still the same, even from
 “ everlasting to everlasting ! whither should
 “ I a poor frail creature (so prone to fall away, and
 “ go to naught, and destroy myself) fly for defence
 “ and security, but to my God, unchangeable,
 “ and

“ and everlasting, and most blessed for ever? O
 “ take me up, and guard me within thy everlasting
 “ arms: and remember me still with the mercy
 “ which thou keepest for thousands, the mercy,
 “ that (like thyself) endureth for ever. O be thou
 “ my God, and the God of my seed, and of all
 “ my friends, and all thy servants: O be our
 “ guide until death; and at all times take care of
 “ us here, and hereafter take us, Lord, to thyself,
 “ and be our reviving, soul-satisfying, portion for
 “ ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION XII.

Of the Lord's power in converting a sinner.

O My soul! consider who it is that maketh thee
 to differ from the most stupid, obdurate, re-
 solved, and incorrigible sinner. That one is taken,
 and another left; that this soon yields, and the next
 still holds out; that the same education, and the
 same application, has such different effects upon the
 persons, whose circumstances are all alike: into
 what shall I resolve it, but his sovereign will, who
 worketh all in all, and does the saving work, where
 he pleases? And when he works, who shall let it?
 To work the things that accompany salvation, in
 the heart of a graceless sinner, he must not only
 change habits, and quicken the dead, and create
 things (*de novo*) that had no being before; but he
 must carry on his design, even against all op-
 position of the *powers of hell*; yea, and against
 the will and consent of the sinner himself, who
 has no mind to it, but only resists, and with-
 stands

stands it, till his eyes be opened, his prejudices removed, and his antipathies conquered ; and himself, like Saul, laid flat on the ground ; and by the same power from on high, which struck him down, raised up another man than he was before. This, O this is the great work, worthy of the great God ; the arm of the Lord revealed, and his own doing. He that can melt down rocks, remove mountains, cast out devils, call things that are not, as if they were. Give new eyes, and ears, and tongues, and legs, and life, and bring a dead corpse out of the grave alive again, only by saying, " Lazarus, come forth : " 'tis he, and none but he, that can bid the sinner, lying in his blood, Live, and speak grace to the soul, dead in trespasses and sins. And to make such a soul alive to God, is more than to fetch up a body turned to corruption. For here is nothing to rise against the work ; but there the sinner, who has no ability to promote his own recovery, yet has so much miserable life left, as to stand in the way against it. Though when called, and called again, there is no hearing, no arising ; yet can he shew enough of motion, to make opposition, to keep possession, and defend himself in that deplorable condition. But till he hear the voice of the Son of God, he will not live, not live any life, that is better than a poor, short preface, to the most wretched everlasting death.

O then, my soul, how marvellous in all enlightened eyes, is that change, which the omnipotent Lord sometimes makes, upon such inhabile, cross-grained materials, to raise up the new and compleat man, out of such old rotten stuff ? Do I wonder to see this so seldom ? And may I not wonder to see it ever at all ? O it is grace, to do so much for any lost creatures : it is rich grace, to do it for unworthy sinners ; but the richest grace of all, to do it for rebellious enemies. And yet so does the gracious
 God

God magnify the abundance of his mercy, to look upon forlorn wretches, not only in the depth of their misery, but in the height of their injury; to make his grace super-abound, over all the abundance of iniquity.

The devil is called *the prince of the power of the air*; yea, the God of this world; too hard for the most in the world; yet how much greater is he that works in believers, than he that so works in the children of disobedience? How much stronger than that strong one, is he that dispossesses him, and rescues his helpless lambs, out of the paws of the roaring lion? Hearts are barred up against all powers, excepting his; but whenever he has a mind to enter, those everlasting doors fly open before him. And here is the work of God, to bring infidels to believe on the name of his Son: to take them off the old root and bottom, and graft them anew in the living stock; incorporate them with Christ, and make them very members of himself: to bring that mind in frame, which was all to pieces: to prevail with those to be his, that were quite otherwise minded: to make the people willing, that had no list to follow his ways; yea, to make furious persecutoors, zealous sticklers for the very persons and things, which once they were all for hindering and destroying. Such mighty things does the right-hand of the Lord bring to pass. And what he has often done, my soul, he is still as able to do. His hand is not shortened, that it cannot save. Therefore will I give up no sinner for hopeless, and incurable, lest I limit the Holy One, and presume to tie up him, to whom all things are possible. But to this Almighty Saviour will I send them; with him will I intercede and labour, on their behalf: and upon the strange recovery of any, to him only I will give all the glory.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** THOU, that hast a creating power, to repair what is decayed, to recover what is lost, to change natures, to work new tempers, to bring light out of darkness, beauty out of deformity; and subdue all things to thyself! reveal thy glorious arm, O Lord, in doing, what none but thyself can ever do: to throw down the strong holds of sin, and speak life unto the souls of dead sinners; to fetch in them that are afar off, and discover thyself even to them that seek thee not; and make such as hear the gospel, to their information, also find it the power of God, to their salvation. O take those into thy own hands, that are not otherwise to be dealt with. And though they defeat the labours of thy servants; let them find, from thee the power, which they are not able to resist, to pluck them as brands out of the fire; and make them willing to be taught and ruled, and healed, and saved, by thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XIII.

Of mens willingness in the day of God's power.

O My soul! is not the day of God's power also the time of his love; when such things he does for the sinner, which never else would be done; and yet without which, that sinner would be for ever undone? What but the power of converting grace can ever bring in vicious men, as volunteers,

lunteers, to chuse and love the government of Christ, and count themselves easy and happy under his yoke? Such are the peculiar people, which our Lord has purchased to himself: and this is indeed, a part of his purchase made for them, that they should have the grace so willingly to offer themselves, and be willing to have him do, even what he will with them: not forced to it, but glad of it: as finding nothing more to their good liking, than to be, and to do, as he would have them. Thus, they who did grudge and reluctate, and nothing but make opposition, do grow more rigorous, and pliant, and tractable, yielding themselves to the Lord, leaving all for him; solacing their souls in his everlasting arms; and following the Lamb, whithersoever he goes. So sweet to them is the sense of their pardon, and the hopes of heaven; that it brings their very hearts into his service, and gives such life and wings to their endeavours, that nothing makes them so cheerful, as to find themselves in such hands, and busied about his work.

But so perverse is the nature of sinful man; so full of prejudice against the ways of God; yea, so apt to scorn the things of Jesus Christ: such a bias of corruption does he carry within: and such a force of temptation does he meet with abroad: that never would he get through all those impediments in his way, did not the Lord seize and carry him, by an almighty efficacy, to put him in a condition of safety. The great God himself must take him in hand to persuade and bring him to it, and make him willing in the day of his power, meet for the master's use, and for the saint's inheritance. O how may Ministers, else, still spend their strength for nought, and labour in vain. And the sinner himself will make nothing of it neither: if God that made him, do not also new-make him, and turn him, that he may be turned, so as to be healed and saved.

O how far was I from what I should be, when I had not so much as any good-will, nor kindness for the work? When, with so much ado, I was brought to my prayers, and to the duties of attendance upon him, whom above all, my soul, thou hast the greatest reason to love? Here then see a work, worthy of God; not to make a forcible entry, and break in with violence upon the will; and yet without any such compulsion, to do more, than could be done, by all manner of persuasion: that is, to give life to the dead; which to effect, O what can the most plausible winning words ever avail? But here a supernatural attraction of divine grace comes and sets the faculties at liberty, takes off the embargo and the enmity, and brings all to move away readily and pleasantly. And though the man seems to do all purely of himself, upon his own reasoning, and considering of matters (such and such causes inducing and moving him to it :) yet, second causes are (all of them) over-ruled by the Supreme, that drives all home, to do the work. And does not experience still tell thee, my soul, how impotent I am, either to move, or so much as to stand, without the same power, that at first did set me up? When sinful corruption breeds indisposition, in the spiritual temper; and prevalent temptations make so many interruptions in the pious frame: by such unhappy incidents, O how frequently am I taken off my mettle; and lie by disabled, and even “to every good work reprobate?” But when, “to will is present with me;” and through grace, my mind and heart is to the service; even a little then, and that but poorly done by me, shall be well taken from me. And though I do not always find it so well as sometimes it has been with me, yet will I wait for his kind hand, who has wrought powerfully on my behalf already, again to restore me; and at last, to perfect what concerns me.

THE PRAYER.

“ **L**ORD of power and love ! on whom I ever
 “ do depend, for all my spiritual, as well as
 “ natural life : without whose quickening influence
 “ I am an inactive log, that can do nothing accep-
 “ table to my God : O shew the victorious power
 “ of thy almighty hand ; and the wonderful effects
 “ of thy heavenly grace, upon my poor disabled
 “ soul : to make me willing to offer up myself to
 “ the Lord, and full of life and strength to do thy
 “ will ; yea, and love to do it ; and delight in no-
 “ thing more than to be so employed. O work
 “ the will in those that are yet unwilling : and let
 “ me find thy good hand upon me ; and thy blef-
 “ sed Spirit working mightily in me, to transform
 “ and renew me, and to carry me even out of self,
 “ beyond my own strength, that I may go on un-
 “ wearied in my course, and abound in thy work,
 “ not only for a spurt, but all the days of my life.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION XIV.

Of God's kindness for godly men.

O My soul ! how different from the way of this world, are the measures which the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, does take, in making his favourites ? When he looks not only upon the rich and the great, and men of renown ; but sets apart for himself, that godly man ; who is the world's spight and disdain : and though such a one may have nothing but his godliness to recommend

mend him ; yet that alone, shall be enough to ingratiate and endear him. For indeed, how can the holy God chuse but incline to that holiness, which is his own image, and his own nature ? Needs must they be favoured by him, that are all for conformity to him. When it is even natural to affect our like, such as are of our own mind and way, and the very transcript of ourselves. And when he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one : Christ being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and believers being born of the same Spirit, the Lord will be sure to have a tender regard to his own grace and likeness, wherever he finds it. And they that resemble him, and are even one with him ; (and upon that account, do also suffer for him) they shall not (they cannot) ever be disowned, or forgotten by him. No, but he loves his own, and he will love them, whoever else hates them ; and most highly esteems them, whoever else despises them. As he is precious to them that believe, so are believers precious in his sight, and he tenders them even as parts of himself.

Here then, see, my soul, the blindness of some, who would be thought very sharp-sighted men ; that they do not understand the worth of God's jewels, nor perceive any form or comeliness in his darlings. What a wonder is here, that the men, who take a pride to be in their prince's fashion, and to imitate the biggest in this world, yet scorn to be followers of God, as dear children : and look upon them as ridiculous antiques, who aim at any such thing ; counting it enough to lose a man, if he but offer to become a godly man. Who are so much disliked by the earthly brood, as they that shew most likeness to their heavenly Father ? But however the world's children may think fit to treat them, yet never will he the worse like them. No, but the higher still shall they be in his books, the
more

more they are run down for his sake ; because they have eyes to see the beauties of that holiness, which others run from as from a monster ; and they will espouse the godly cause, even among such as repute it scandalous to appear on that account. When their hearts are full of care, to take holy ways, and to please the Lord, in living according to his Word : God that is for them, will then make all that are against them know how much he has loved them, and how highly he resents the malignity of such as will presume to touch the apple of his eye, and strike at him, in persecuting of them. They that are lovers of holiness, are the beloved of the Most High and Holy ONE : though their sanctification be here in its imperfection, yet when they are but rightly inclined, and stand well affected, for the holy way, they will be spared and favoured by the holy Lord. For this is the only garb and dress, that renders them amiable in his eyes, when they have put on Christ, and are clothed in the robes of righteousness, and (according to their frail capacity) are holy, as he that has called them is holy ; and to come up still to a nearer imitation, is their earnest desire and ambition. O, who can express that dear regard he has for them, which passeth knowledge ! 'Tis not to be told, what pleasure the Lord has in his saints, whom he loves with an everlasting love, and will still rejoice over them to do them good. And then, my soul, what need I to matter any one's bitterness against me, if the Lord of all has such a favour for me ? O that I may but be meet for it, blest with it, and happy in it ! And then am I armed against the contempt of the proud, and all the hatred of the world. Then can I smile at their scoffs and frowns, and slight all their lives and leagues. O may I but have the holy qualifications, which God himself approves and loves ! And then let who will
carp

carp and censure ; his love shall be my shield and buckler. I will pity the infatuated enemies of his grace and holiness : I will bless him, that has made me otherwise minded ; and taught me to put the highest estimate upon that pearl of greatest price, which is, above all, to be valued. I will delight myself in the love of my Lord ; and glory in the favour that I have found with my God : nor will I then live in dread of his justice, but rejoice even at the remembrance of his holiness.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD! thou art the God glorious in holiness, that hatest the workers of iniquity ;
 “ but with a pleasant countenance doest behold the
 “ upright and holy. Even, that holiness, which is
 “ the world’s eye-sore, is thy pleasure : and they
 “ that are offended at it, thou wilt enter into judgment with them for it : confusion and destruction will be their cursed lot and portion. O that
 “ I may be enriched and adorned with thy grace ;
 “ and stand fair and well in thy sight ! make me,
 “ Lord, truly righteous and godly before thee ;
 “ that (through the comeliness which thou hast
 “ put upon me) I may be lovely unto thee. And
 “ let it be a small thing with me, to bear the censure and rancour of men ; so that I may but
 “ find good acceptance and favour with my God,
 “ through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XV.

Of God's promises.

O My soul! if the Lord will be pleased to give his Word, to do us good; what tenure then in the world so sure, and what subsistence so comfortable, as to live by faith, upon the promises of God? Those exceeding great and precious promises, wherein he, that is no way indebted to his creatures (any further than he will condescend to enter the voluntary engagements;) has made himself his people's debtor: and given them a right, humbly to plead with him, what he has so promised to them.

That God is the chief good, and eternal fountain of all bliss; though this be the greatest truth, yet is it no sufficient prop to bear up the sinful soul from sinking under desperate anguish; without some understanding of that fatherly kindness, and particular mercy of God in Christ Jesus, which is above the discovery of nature's light, and which cannot be learned from the enjoyment of any outward blessings; or from the observation of his bounty, which we experience in our worldly goods. For though I know God to be infinitely good, and better than all the world, yet do I also know his justice to be a branch of that goodness; and if he did not hate and punish the evil, how then were he just, or good? therefore will his very goodness engage his justice, to condemn all the unbelieving and ungodly part of the world. And what assurance
then

then can I have of his saving love, without regard to a satisfaction made for my sins? And what evidence of my share in the blessed benefit of that satisfaction made by the Son of God, without a word of promise upon which to bottom my hopes? Till I fasten upon some promise of God, I am still at uncertainty and in anxiety. Nothing else can solve my doubts, and suppress my fears. But all the conclusions that I am able then to draw in my own favour, they are only conjectural, and can amount to no more than a peradventure, and the Ninevites, who can tell, if God will be so kind? But when once God hath spoken, I will rejoice. And where the Lord hath said it, and I have his Word for it, I dare, and will then build upon it. There my soul can fix, and be at rest; yea, take not only good satisfaction; but the sweetest consolation. Because I know how faithful he is that has promised, who can never frustrate the expectation so raised. 'Twas indeed purely an act of his grace and mercy, to promise; but then there is the obligation of his truth and fidelity to make it good. Now, my soul, how do I value myself upon the promise of my friend; though no more than a man; and think I am safe enough under such a security? Yet this friend is mutable, and he may deceive me. But that God should do so, it is impossible. Yea, man cannot still help me; though he not only promised, but intended, and desired to do it. But the Lord of all, who has every thing in the world at his beck, can never so be put to it, but in his hands continually lies the power to fulfil all the largest of his promises.

Now it is not here to point at all those glorious stars, that sparkle in the bright firmament of God's Word. Let me stay thee, my soul, with some little tastes, in a short abstract. There, godliness has the
promise

promise of both worlds: all the necessaries of this thrown in as a surpluse, to those that seek the other: all the good things, that are good for them; and protection, and consolation also, under the evil; yea, deliverance from it, and happy fruit and advantage by it, that the very evil shall work for their good, and they shall not be the worse, but better for it.

To support me under the dejecting sense of my sins, I have a promise, that the Lord will not break a bruised reed, but give rest to the heavy laden; yea, that he will blot out our transgressions for his own sake, and not remember our sins; but when we confess them, he will forgive them. And to comfort me against my daily failings, when my care and desire is to do better, I have the promise, that such as hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled; that the willing mind, according to what a man has, shall be accepted; and that the gracious God, instead of exacting the miscarriages of them that fear him, will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him; yea, even to such as have abounded in iniquity, he has promised (upon their return) abundantly to pardon; and where the guilt recoils upon them, and sorely afflicts them, his promise is, not to remember it against them, nor mention it to them.

Where I am afraid to fall off, and lose all; and that I shall never hold out, and endure to the end; I find the promise, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; and, none shall pluck my sheep out of my hands; yea, I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life; such being kept, not by their own strength, but by the power of God, through faith to salvation. When the fear of death falls upon me, I hear a joyful sound, to drown the funeral knell; O

death, I will be thy plague : O grave, I will be thy victory. Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord. To die, is gain : and to be with Christ, far better. And when I am solicitous, as to my future being ; what shall become of me, and how I shall be disposed of, after I fleet from hence ; that sweet voice of my Saviour revives my soul, let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : I go to prepare a place for you ; and I will come again to receive you. Yea, the mean while, in all my wants and straights here by the way, I have the promise, to receive, for my asking ; to find, upon my seeking ; and to have admittance, upon my knocking : and not only the promise made to grace, and to the performance of duties ; but the promise also of grace, and of the power for performance of those duties ; yea, the promise of salvation, upon believing in my Saviour ; even when I come short in performing of my office.

These, and a thousand such promises, my soul, are thy sweet refuges ; where to turn in, and ease thyself, when weary and disquieted within me : the blessed harbours, where thou mayest take up ; the freehold, and portion ; in which thou mayest settle thyself, and look upon it as all thy own. And then, O how canst thou ever sufficiently admire and magnify the grace and loving kindness of thy God ; so bountifully to provide for thee ! and all the best things, so plenteously to enjoy, that he should bestow upon thee ! O the height and depth, and length and breadth of such love that passeth knowledge ! adore the eternal fountain, whence it flows ; and let this God be thy God ; thy life, thy hope, thy trust, thy delight, thy exceeding joy, even to the utmost extent of thy immortal being.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** My GOD! it is only by the encourage-
“ ment of thy own gracious covenant, that I
“ can call thee mine; because thou hast promised
“ to those, whom thou takest into covenant with
“ thyself, that thou wilt be their God; and they
“ shall be thy people, O the riches of that promise,
“ which comprises in it all the rest! and O the
“ riches, and wonders of thy grace, that ever thou
“ shouldest vouchsafe so to indent with thy poor
“ creatures, to make them thy children, and the
“ heirs of salvation, and give them the strong con-
“ solation, not only to design it for them, but pro-
“ mise it to them! O thou that hast given the pro-
“ mises, give me also the faith to see them; to be
“ persuaded of them, to embrace them, and live
“ upon them, and take comfort in them; yea, give
“ me grace also to carry as becomes them; and
“ with all my soul, to bless and praise thee for
“ them, now and for evermore, Amen.”

MEDITATION XVI.

Of God's giving his Holy Spirit.

O My soul! how good soever be the gifts of
God's Spirit; yet is there a better gift than
any such abilities as are granted to some for the
sake of others, and to a few particular persons for
the general service of the church; which, how well
soever they may succeed to bystanders, are not al-
ways saving to the owners. They may commend

us to men, and not approve us to God; yea, at the same time that they set us off, they may so puff us up, that we shall run the hazard of perishing with them, instead of being the better for them. But the Spirit of God, by his grace, to dwell in us, that is the greatest and best of gifts, which can, in this life, be conferred upon us; being a gift, not only to our commendation, but which accompanieth salvation. And to be born of the Spirit of God, O how much more honourable is it, than to come of the noblest parentage in the world! such honour have all his saints, who are partakers even of the divine nature; and therefore are so the excellent of the earth; that with them none else can be equal among the sons of men. For, who so great, as they that are great with God? And who so rich, as the rich in grace, that are rich towards God? That have the gold tried in the fire, Rev. iii. 18. The true and durable good, which will abide when all the world's good is gone to dirt.

Many good things men may give us, but they cannot give us the sanctified use of them, nor good success with them, nor the heavenly blessing upon them. And then may all such good tend only to our hurt. But it is the renewing grace of God's good Spirit alone that indeed does us good, because it makes us good. And there is no such good in nature to be found: but even that which we call good nature, comes exceeding short of this blessed good of God's grace, which is the restoration, the beauty; yea, the health, and very life of the soul, without which a man, in the sight of God, is dead, and sinking down to a worse, everlasting death. But grace makes us alive unto God; and fit to live in glory for ever with the Lord.

What then, my soul, can so refresh thee, as this oil of gladness so poured into thee, and the reflexion of such love as the Father hath bestowed upon thee?
such

such is the peace and consolation, which arises from the sense of grace and sanctification, that good and perfect gift, which the God of all grace bestows upon every child of his; because, without it, he knows, they cannot subsist, nor live, and do well here; nor yet find, or follow the way, to live, and be blessed for ever. This grace then, his Christ has purchased for them; and his Spirit, he has promised to put within them, Ezek. xxxvi. 11. Therefore will he not withhold it from them. For then, how should he save them? When there is no freedom from the law of sin and death, but by the overruling law of the Spirit of life. But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: there is the spiritual mind, that brings life and peace; and there is the heavenly guide, to lead me into all truth: not only to point out my way, but also incline me to love it, and enable me to follow it. This Spirit witnesseth with my spirit, that I am the child of God: emboldens me to cry, Abba, Father: stirs me up to prayer, and helps me in it, to make something of it, even an offering acceptable to God, and an adventure of happy account to my soul. And shall it not then also excite my thankfulness to God for his unspeakable gift? That I, who am so unworthy the least of his mercies, should be enriched with the greatest of his blessings: that his free Spirit, which blows where he listeth, should vouchsafe to blow upon my garden; and that I should receive such peculiar kindness, who have been guilty of the foulest abuses! O my soul, what manner of love is this! that the Spirit of God should become my freehold; and not only be given unto me, but so settled upon me, as not to depart from me? For which I build upon the faithful Word of his gracious covenant, Isa. lix. 21. And may I for ever give him the honour due to his great name.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** My GOD! it is thy glory, to do good ;
 “ and with thy goodness, to cover, and con-
 “ quer our evil. Thy good Spirit is a gift too
 “ great for me, a provoking sinner, to receive ; but
 “ not too great a good, for thee, the Lord of
 “ power and love, to give. O pour out that Holy
 “ Spirit upon me ; without which, I cannot know
 “ thy way, nor do thy will. And let the Spirit of
 “ the Lord be my blessed portion ; to dwell in me,
 “ and reign over me ; and be my teacher and
 “ leader, my sanctifier, and comforter, from hence-
 “ forth even for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION XVII.

Of God's giving a new Heart, and a new Spirit,

THE new-creature, my soul, does not suppose a new substance, or new faculties, raised up in thee, which before thou hadst not : no, but new qualities and habits, new inclinations and dispositions, introduced into the old powers, so to alter the case with them, that they come to appear as if they were none of the same. Nor does it give me ground to hope for a total cashiering of all the old corruptions in an instant, where the change is gradual ; as that in setting up a pile of building, or rearing of a crop of corn. And yet it is not only putting a new face on things, but a real change to the

the bottom; not only, as to some few particulars, but all over. It is such a change, as dispels the old darkness, and false conceits about the things of salvation; and herein gives even to the unlearned, better skill and insight, than what is attained by the great scholars themselves, that are unrenewed; a change, that batters down the old confidence, and lofty opinion of a sorry condition; and makes those that were presumptuous, and highly conceited of themselves, drop all the proud brags of their good hearts, and their good hopes; a change, that takes men off the old haunts and ill ways, to mind and follow quite other and better things; yea, a change, that alters the old ends and aims; which before a man's renovation, are only to get the world; and to fulfil his lusts; to make himself great, or to please his flesh; but being once renewed, he seeks and pursues matters higher and worthier, to please and enjoy his God, to keep and save his soul; such are the things that he has in his eyes, and upon which he fixes his heart, as the great drift of his life.

This is the change, my soul, where God gives a new heart, and a new spirit; and where men are so renewed, there are not the old sentiments and presumptions, the old talk and carriage, the old loves and tendencies; but a new sense, new discourse, new behaviour, new desires, and the new man throughout. And who but he alone that first made me, can so new-make me? It is his handy-work, Eph. ii. 10. He darts in beams of heavenly light, to shew me the things of my peace, and the way to his glory. He breaks my heart under the sense of sin, and the dread of his wrath. He makes me willing in the day of his power, to surrender myself, and to follow whither he calls, and delight to be doing as he commands. O how impotent here is even the mightiest man in the world, that has not so much

much as the command of his own heart? How much less can he master the wills, and renew the hearts of others? Nay, even the best of men, that have much grace in themselves, yet cannot they derive any of it to whom they will: no, they can dig, and plant, and water, and dress; but cannot make either the tree or the fruit. O who but the living God, can ever give life to the dead? It is a mighty work, worthy of himself; and admired in all the eyes that he hath opened, to raise the heavenly structure, that shall stand for ever, even out of rubbish and ruins; yea, out of confusion and opposition. That which is impossible with men, yet how easy can Omnipotence bring it to pass? Therefore will not I despair, either for myself, or others. For how soon can he do it, where I least of all expect it? The heart that I find such frequent cause to complain of, yet can he that made heaven and earth, make it even as he would have it. The good work that he has begun in me, how does it stick, and often seem to go backward with me? Yet through all interruptions and disappointments, he can carry it on still, till he has crowned it in glory. Take heart then, my soul, and comfort thyself in the almighty power of my Lord, whose hands not only are able to amend what is amiss, but to make all anew; and still go on to wait upon him, believing, that he will never leave thee, till he has perfected all that concerns thee.

THE PRAYER.

“ **G**REAT GOD, who workest all in all, and especially the work of grace upon the hearts of thy people; take my heart in hand, I beseech thee, to work it unto thy will; yea, give me the new heart, and new spirit, to make me another
“ manner

“ manner of person than I have been, and such as
 “ thou wouldest have me to be. O renew me after
 “ thy blessed image ; and make me a better instru-
 “ ment of thy glory ; to minister unto others, of
 “ the grace that I have received at thy hands. For-
 “ sake not, Lord, the work of thy own hands ; but
 “ work in me all that thou requirest of me ; for
 “ thy own mercy’s sake, in my blessed Saviour
 “ Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XVIII.

Of man’s pre-eminence above the brutes.

O My soul ! pause a while, and seriously consider, who it is, that makes me to differ, and how I became better, and a nobler creature, than a stone or a tree, than a horse or a fly. Who teaches me more than the beasts of the earth, and makes me wiser than the fowls of heaven ? Was it not in the hands of the same God, who created me and them (if he had pleased) to make me as one of them ? Yea, he that has now raised me so far above them, could not he have changed our places, and thrown me as much below them ? What had the potter (who of the same lump, makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour) but his own will, to hinder ; that he did not turn to dishonour the vessel, which he advanced to honour ?

When the poor brutes go hanging down their heads to the ground ; I have a body erect, with my head aiming at heaven. And while even the most sagacious animals are not aware, who made them, I have not only the understanding to know God my

Maker, but a heart large enough to receive him, and a soul fitted for ever to enjoy him. I share in the dominion which he has given man (as his lord-deputy here) over all the works of his hands; and I see the rest of the creatures (as man's subjects) crouch to him, and stand in awe of him. All the greatest privileges, and the highest joys of my life, are imperceptible by them, and unknown to them; my reason and speech, my acquaintance with letters, insight into arts, knowledge of the world, freedom of choice, and capacity of religion, are quite out of their sight, as well as above their reach. To reflect on myself, and discourse with others; to read and write, to survey countries, remark passages, and record histories; to entertain my ears with harmonious sounds, and my eyes with charming sights; and above all, to seek the Most High, and correspond with my God, the chief good, and lay out for an eternal blessed life, to be for ever enjoyed after death; these are attainments, with which none of the brutes have any thing to do: such privileges being quite out of their sphere, and none of them falling to their share.

And now, my soul, that I am thus dignified, and enriched with the favour and bounty of Heaven, shall I fall into the fond admiration of myself, and the haughty ostentation of my parts? Or shall I go and disdain, and insult my poor fellow-creatures, that lie in lower classes? This be far from me, when I have quite another use to make of my gifts and accomplishments, than so to forget whence I received them, and to whom I am beholden for them, as only to feed my vanity and pride, and scorn, with them. In this microcosm, so fearfully and wonderfully made, I am to behold and admire, not only the strange contrivance, but the distinguishing kindness, of my omnipotent, all-wise, and most gracious Creator: to make me so far
 afore-hand

afore-hand with any; yea, so much better than the most of his creatures in the world. That I am a man; O how thankful should I be to God! how observant of him, that has done so well for me! and in what care, to employ the noble faculties to his praise, by which he has enabled me to bring him glory, as the other creatures are not in a capacity! but their obsequiousness to me, how does it rebuke and shame my undutifulness, to a Master infinitely better? And the very dog, that is so much at my command, corrects my ill manners to him that owes and keeps me, more than I do that poor creature. How often do I abuse his creatures, to play the tyrant over them, or to enflame my wantonness, and embolden my rebellion in the use of them? And so I make myself even one of the herd, which God did make me so much above. Yea, when I no better remember and understand myself, I become not only like to, but worse than the beasts that perish. And if I so debase and brutify myself, may not I one day come to wish, that I had been no more than a brute, and never had known the use of speech and rational sense, to make me liable to a more terrible judgment for the abuse? O let me then dread such profanation of God's bountiful largess; and be so careful to carry suitable to my noble nature, and worthy my rational immortal soul, that when God shall come to require it of me, I may give it up, not with confusion, but with comfort, into his hands.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** THOU, that hast done so great things for
 “ me, make me more sensible of the high
 “ obligation thy love has laid upon me. Forgive
 “ me, I beseech thee, all my foul abuses of such
 “ precious

“ precious favours. And give me a heart unfeign-
 “ edly thankful for thy bounty ; and the grace, to
 “ live to thy glory. O let not my speech and ra-
 “ tional powers, by which thou hast exalted me
 “ above the brutes, be perverted to serve any bru-
 “ tish base designs ; but with my mind and mouth,
 “ and all my soul, let me ever bless and serve, and
 “ honour and please my glorious Maker, through
 “ the grace and help of Christ Jesus my Saviour,
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION XIX.

Of the Christian's advantage above an infidel.

O My soul ! how graciously has the God of my
 mercy provided for me, to cast my lot in a
 Christian country ! and so early to prevent me with
 his loving kindness, that the disease of my nature,
 which was hereditary, should find a remedy so rea-
 dy, and the best Physician at hand, even as soon as
 I was born into the world ! if there be but one way
 of salvation, and no other name under heaven, but
 that of Jesus Christ, whereby I may be saved : O
 then how precious is the mercy, that I had not been
 brought forth and educated, where Christ is not
 named ; or where he is only rejected and despised !
 My very Christian religion, it is a goodly heritage,
 and wealthy portion. For, without this heavenly
 day-spring from on high, even the most ingenious
 people are in the saddest darkness. And without
 Christ's lightsome gospel, even the most fruitful
 land is but a barren wilderness. The Jews that in-
 voked

voked his blood on their heads, have the curse eating into their souls; and while they abhor God's Beloved, themselves are abhorred of the Lord, however any of them may thrive in the world. They will none of the Messias, to gather them in, and set them up: and if they believe not, that Jesus is He, they must wander still wide of the truth; and at last die in their sins.

All the splendor and gallantry of Turkey cannot hide the shame of their nakedness, till they put on Christ, and wear the livery of the Son of God; which out-shines all the bravery and glory of the world. Kings and rulers of the earth themselves must be so wise, as to ingratiate themselves with the Heir of Heaven, or ever they shall find the way to a better kingdom, still flourishing and everlasting. He that has no part or lot in this Saviour; let him have all the Indies gold, yet he would be a beggar. O poor wretches, in the very midst of all such treasures; which are but dross and dirt, where he is wanting, in whom dwells all fulness! This makes the Moors souls blacker than their bodies; that the Sun of Righteousness is not risen to them: and they are not for him, to purify and cleanse them; to beautify and adorn them. Miserable people! whoever are none of his people. Let them have every thing about them to entertain and please the flesh; they are but feeding for the slaughter, and will be undone, if they find not the grace of Christ, to change their minds; and if they do not believe, to the saving of their souls. If they lie out, as strangers and foreigners, and get not into the ark of Christ's church; they have no security from the saddest of all misery.

But without sending any thoughts so far abroad, may not I find infidels too many, even within the borders of Christendom? And some that would pass in the tale of Christians, who are small friends
to

to Christianity; such as could never give hearty thanks to God for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. Should I put the question to the Deist, or Socinian, what advantage has the Christian? I could not expect the answer should be, much every way. When, according to them, it is little or none. And if they will own any thing of the Messiah (to make the natural religion ever the clearer; and offer some helps to perform the old covenant better :) Yet they will hear no talk of God a Saviour, nor endure Christ's satisfaction, for securing of our salvation. And so, denying the Lord that bought them, they sap the very foundation of his religion; and even give up the cause of Christianity, throwing open all the inclosure of the Church, to lie in common with Paganism and Infidelity. Thus some that are within the ark, cannot be content, but they must cast themselves out, and chuse to perish, rather than be beholden to our Lord Redeemer.

But, my soul, whoever are so ill advised, to dispute themselves out of the blessed privilege, and make a scorn of the Mediator's propitiation: never count it the less precious, because some do not understand how to prize it. For to be called of God, to the knowledge of his truth, and the faith in his Son; to have Christ revealed, the gospel preached, and the Word of salvation sent to us; to have the way of our pardon and peace with God, and the hopes of an eternal glorious inheritance (better than all the kingdoms of this world) set before us; here are the blessings of God's right-hand, the reviving dews of heaven, and most precious favours from on high, showered down upon us. O my soul! what is all the fat of the earth, and good of the world, to the tidings of a Redeemer, and the grace of God, that brings salvation? Christians are a peculiar sort, divided from common mankind, and set
upon

upon higher grounds, and better terms. They have a price put into their hands to make them all kings, and set them up, to reign most happy and glorious for ever. They are not only followers, but members of Christ; children of the Most High, and heirs of glory. This may they come to; and this are they cut out for. But then they must be real, and not only titular Christians; for what is it, to name the name of Christ, if there be not his life and Spirit: But never, alas, was name more profaned; never was name more wrong placed. O how many that bear it, neither mind nor matter what it means? They must needs be so called, when that is all they have to shew for it; and the whole of their conduct does nothing but disprove it. Any that never heard of Christ, might both live and believe as well; and many of another denomination do much better.

But, can such as these reckon upon the advantages of Christianity, when they are so like to experience the clear contrary; and the bigger condemnation, for such intolerable pollution of the most excellent profession? Even Heathens shall rise up in the judgment, and condemn them; because they did more and better, by a natural illumination, than these by the brighter light of gospel-revelation. O let me ever dread (my soul) so to defile the waters of my baptism; and smut the albs and ensigns of my high calling, and get in with the best cause, only to stab it to the heart. But by the light that shines upon me, O let me do the will of him, that has so called and obliged me; and let me prove mine a better religion, because it produces a better conversation; and makes me shew a more excellent way, as well as profess a more heavenly faith.

THE PRAYER.

“ **H**OW kind and precious have been thy thoughts to me, O gracious God! in calling me so early to the faith of Christ; and chusing for me my religion, even from the beginning, and putting me upon that way of salvation, where I have the most high and joyful hopes before me, and a free and open passage to thy heavenly kingdom, made for me! Blessed be thy name, that I see these gospel-days, and enjoy the happy benefit of that new and gracious covenant, which provides for the recovery, even of such as were lost; and puts them in a sure way to heaven; that could never find the way, nor gain the end of themselves. I thank thee, O my Saviour, that I am called by thy name, and numbered of thy flock, and put in a capacity, to inherit thy glory. O teach and help me, Lord, to use, as I ought, the price put into my hands; and so to make my advantage of thy favour to my soul; that by the direction of thy holy religion, I may attain to the fruition of thy everlasting salvation. Amen.”

MEDITATION XX.

Of the great blessing of the reformation.

MY soul! if I do prize the pure Christian religion, I cannot but bless God for the reformation, which was only the elaboratory, to purge it from the Antichristian corruption, and reduce it to its primitive condition. Our enemies themselves
being

being judges, some of the most considerable among them, could not deny a reformation to be any more than needful: and if the instruments, or manner, or measure of its execution, were not to their good liking; must I forbear to rejoice, that the foul pest-house was cleansed; because such as hate to be reformed, were not at all pleased? O how glad may I be of the escape, to get far enough from such contagion! and how much do I despise the thunder of all their menaces; who cry, No salvation out of our communion? When I feel myself safe where I am; they shall fail to terrify me back again, into the old danger. Whoever gives out the big words, My soul for yours, if you come here; I am not so to be decoyed out of my senses; when I find myself in so much better hands: nor have I any list to be a slave; when I may stand fast in the liberty where-with Christ has made me free. If Romish masters would be lords, not only of my body and estate, but of my faith and conscience; I shall pray to be excused from submitting my neck to such a yoke. And if any else has a mind, to be a vassal, or a brute, I had rather keep the use of my reason and common sense: and think, I could not wish worse to such as are weary of their liberty, and sick to get into the lap of such a mother; than that they might enjoy their own wretched choice, and all the privileges of her endless impositions, and rigid tyrannies.

Surely, my soul, it can be no dangerous error, if I am for believing God, rather than man: however the men boast of infallibility; I am most certain, that he who is Truth itself, cannot deceive me. No doubt at all of his institutions, and the directions of his Word; but I see no such reason, to own the authority of their faction; or to be determined by the inventions of their brain; who can make so bold even with the divine revelation, as there to add, or

diminish at pleasure; and one while, evacuate or contradict the express charge of the Lord: and again, “teach for doctrines, the commandments of men:” and set up articles, to be believed under pain of damnation; concerning which, there is the deepest silence in Holy Scripture; and nothing there said, but what looks quite another way. I magnify the loving-kindness of the Lord, to give the reformers wisdom and grace, spirit and courage, to wrest the gospel out of such hands; and to cast my lot in a church, that allows me to search the Scriptures; and to see with my own eyes, and judge myself, what is right. Here am I called upon to worship the Lord my God, and him only; and if I have no images, I hope to do as well without them. Nor do I care to make my suit to saints or angels; as long as I have free access and encouragement, to go when I will, and call upon their Lord. This I am commanded to do: but he that bids me flee from idolatry, and faith, he will not give away his glory, leaves me no allowance at all to do the other.

No damage can I see, that thou art like to sustain, my soul, by disowning the whole series of their doctrines, concerning satisfaction and purgatory, and masses, and pardons purchased with money; which hang all on a string, and too well agree, in derogating from the fulness of our blessed Lord’s sacrifice, and oblation of himself, once for all. If I do abide only by this; and reckon upon no purgatory, but the purging of my conscience, by his blood; and think of evening my accounts no other way, but by his paying of my scores for me: I take myself here to be sure enough: and nothing behind hand with them, that make account, to compound for their sins, with their purses; and to piece out Christ’s redemption, by their own contribution. Let them challenge salvation at the Lord’s hands, for their merits:

merits: I abhor the presumption, to stand upon such terms with him, whose gift is eternal, and whom none can so oblige, but that he is still an unprofitable servant.

If they have a devotion that is to be promoted by ignorance, and not fit to appear in a known language; instead of envying them the privilege of such helps, I thank the gracious Lord, for planting me in a church, that is not ashamed or afraid, to bring her doctrines in open light before all; and sets up no worship, but in such a common tongue, as the meanest capacities know how to bear their share in, and say amen to. And if they fancy themselves able to do such mighty feats, by their innumerable aves, pilgrimages, reliques, holy water, and the whole apparatus of their theatrical service: I fear no danger at all, by refusing to lean the stress of my salvation upon any such broken reeds, when the gospel of my Lord shews me enough to depend upon, for the saving of thee, my soul, though none of these things had ever been thought of in the world. I hang upon what my Redeemer has done; and what he and his Apostles have taught; but I dare not trust my soul upon the intention of a Romish priest; who (if he mean not as he acts, in his ministering to me) may (when he will) defraud me of the fruit of what Christ has wrought for me.

And if I do grant the possibility of salvation to any in that communion; it is a charity ill requited by them, and upon which they have small reason to value themselves, because it comes from the heretic; that, with them, is in nothing else authentic; and also from one that dare not venture his own soul in that bottom; and does not make that concession to them on the account of any thing wherein they oppose us; but only for that substance of Christianity, which they retain with us; and through that mercy of God (which I dare not limit) passing over
the

the rest. But it is my wisdom, to know when I am well myself; and to keep still to that church, which I cannot flit from, but I shall be upon far worse terms, and run the far greater danger of my soul. In the church reformed then it is, that I do fix my station, and adore the grace of God, which has disposed of me in that communion. And may my life but correspond with my faith, and my conversation be as good as my religion is true; and then, though the cruel Babylon (drunk with the blood of saints) curse and damn me, I will bless the Lord, that I have no part in her communion; and hope here still for his heavenly benediction; and at last, to see the joy of his salvation.

THE PRAYER.

“ **T**O thee, my GOD, who hast chose my inheritance for me, I desire to offer up the devout and unfeigned thanks of my soul, that thou hast determined my residence in a land, where thy holy religion is professed and protected; and the Antichristian idolatry, superstition, and tyranny exposed and renounced. Blessed be thy name, that thou hast removed me from the tents of those men, who are mad upon their idols, and delight in blood, and lord it over thy heritage: O save thy people from them; both from their cruel hands; and also from their abominable errors. And give us, Lord, the advantage of them, in our better living, as well as in our truer believing; and make us reformed in our conversation, as well as in our religion. O let us have such a value for it, and do such justice to it, and walk so worthy of it, that thou mayest continue it unto us, and ours; and grant us to reap the happy fruits of it, in peace and holiness here; and in thy heavenly joy and glory for ever. Amen.”

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THE THIRD DECAD.

MEDITATION XXI.

Of Christ the Lord.

THAT the low circumstances, and the mean appearance of the world's Saviour, here upon earth, may not tempt me to count him unlike to redeem Israel; nor ever to degrade him in my thoughts, who was pleased so to abase himself, only for our sakes; let me remember, O my soul, that the man Christ Jesus is also Lord of all; and over all, God blessed for ever: the Son and Heir of Heaven, above all the angels of God; Lord both of the dead and the living; born a King, not only of the Jews, but of the world: higher than the kings of the earth; not having barely titles, without authority; but all power in heaven and in earth. Power (there, where no worldly powers can reach) over hearts and thoughts; souls and consciences; yea, over infernal spirits, and all the powers of hell. Power to turn and wind the soul; to bind and loose the conscience; to remit and retain sins; to captivate the heart and will; and bring in, even the most unwilling, whenever he pleases: (yet so, as not to infringe their liberty; but that they shall come also of their own accord) power to throw down the strong holds of wickedness in high places;

to

to strike a killing dread into hypocrites; to hew and slay the ungodly, with the Word of his mouth; and at the same time, to give peace and confidence, the spirit of a sound mind, and the blessing of a sure defence, and strong consolation, and eternal redemption, to every poor soul, that flies into his arms.

Thus is my Lord Jesus exalted most high above all. Though, as God, he could not be made any greater than he ever was; yet his Deity, that suffered a kind of eclipse, in the likeness of sinful flesh, has broke out, like the sun, from under clouds, to shine forth in its own glory. And to his human nature also, it was the highest advancement, to be raised far above all principalities and powers, in the heavenly places, at the right-hand of the Majesty on high: where he lives and reigns a glorious King of kings, and Lord of lords; and so will do for ever.

Now, shall not this great Lord, my soul, be thy Lord? Wilt thou refuse this man to reign over thee; unto whom it is the wisdom, even of kings and judges of the earth, to stoop and submit? O let no insinuating lust, no aspiring Agag, no idol Mammon, ever usurp his throne in my heart; but yield up all into his hands; and let him that made thee and bought thee, have the rule and government of thee. Tremble at the wrath of this King; be awed by the commands of this Lord; honour him in thy heart; obey him in thy life. Let it not be only bowing of the knee, or crying, "Hail, Master!" but asking, with the humbled Saul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Waiting on him, as servants on their Master; and hearing him in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto thee. Down with all competitors, that would carry thee another way; and away with all contrary commanders: to make him thy Lord, by choice, as he is so
by

by right : and let him have thee, who will never enthral thee ; but make thee free indeed ; yea, make thee, like himself, a conqueror, and a King ; to sit down with him in the throne, and to enjoy all the glories of his kingdom.

This comes of owning, and following the Lord Jesus. No Lord so great ; no Lord so good. O my soul ! thou mayest not only be willing, but glad with all thy heart, to be under such a Master, who is not only a Lord but a Saviour ; and would now rule thee, only that he may for ever save thee : thou mayest see heaven even in every step of thy duty ; and take the greatest delight, so to be employed. But learn with him, to be meek and lowly ; that with him also, thou mayest rise to triumph, and reign in bliss and glory. Care not for high and great things of this world, so that thou mayest be heir of that heavenly kingdom, which he has settled upon the poor in spirit. As he went on, doing his Father's business ; not regarding the contradiction of sinners, nor the persecution of enemies : so go after him, slighting all the censures and contempt, with which thou meetest in the holy way through which he went. Care not how others call thee, nor how they use thee ; so that he will own thee, and accept thee ; and be all in all to thee. And for whatever thou wantest, look up still to thy Lord, that is in place and power, to do for thee ; and that can also work what he will in thee. He is the Lord-treasurer of heaven ; that has, at his disposal, enough to enrich and satisfy, and glorify every soul that seeks to him ; and he has a heart as large as his treasure, to be as kind to them, as they can expect from him. And when cast down, at the sense of thy own impotence and weakness ; take comfort in this, that " the Lord is thy strength and thy Redeemer." Maugre all enemies and maladies,
he

he can set thee free, and make thee whole. Thy Lord, that was born on earth, now reigns in the heavens, and is mighty to save; the great Author and Finisher of thy faith. O look to him then; trust in him, depend upon him, expect and crave from him, all that is needful for his poor servant to receive, and all that is fit for such a blessed Lord to give.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Blessed JESUS, my Lord! thou art most worthy to reign over me; and happy it is for me, to serve under thee. Remember me, Lord, now thou art in thy kingdom. Remember me with the favour, which thou bearest to thy people. Make me true to my Lord, and faithful in thy service, and protect and keep, guide and help, bless and save thy servant. O take care of me; watch over me; provide for me; and give not only thy laws, but thy Spirit to me, that I may not only know thy will, but be enabled to do thy work. Deliver me, Lord, from all my sins, and the enemies of my soul, that would interrupt me in the way of my duty. And lead me, and rule me: and never leave nor forsake me, till thou hast (in thy rich mercy) brought me to the blessed kingdom of thy glory. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXII.

Of Christ the Lord of Glory.

O My soul! shall I think ever the worse of my Saviour, because, when here in the world, he made so mean a figure, and did not come in visible state, shining with outward splendor? Shall I keep up the Jewish humour; to hide my face from him; and not esteem, but despise and reject him: because he declined those recommendations and ensigns of Majesty, wherewith the princes of the earth use to command regard, and secure their dignity? God forbid, that ever he should so lose of his glory in my sight; because he would be pleased, once to lay it aside on my account: or that I should be ashamed of him, in his humiliation, whereinto he sunk himself, to work my salvation. For nevertheless was he the Lord of power and glory, for his appearing here in such weakness and poverty. Glorious he was before all worlds, with that "glory which he had with his Father," John xvii. 5. Being the "brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. And though his manifestation in the flesh was a kind of obscuration; to put that glory under a veil; yet there was the glory of his mercy, in such condescension, to relieve our misery. And even in the lowest, and most contemptible circumstances of his infancy, yet could the worthies of the world (whom some account kings of the earth) see reason to come from far, and fall down to worship him. And in his life, though adorned

with no external pomp ; yet was he glorious, both for his holiness and his miracles. For pure he was, without any the least blemish ; and so did he appear beautiful and resplendent, to all enlightened eyes. For his disciples “ beheld his glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father ; full of grace and truth,” John i. 14. And his miracles, what did they shew less, than a divine power, and the finger of God ? Therefore was the working of his first miracle called, “ The manifestation of his glory,” John ii. 11. Thus did the rays of his divinity break forth, and sparkle in the faces of all serious spectators. And they who were conversant with him, even in the days of his flesh, are said to be “ eye-witnesses of “ his Majesty,” 2 Pet. i. 16.

Yea, in his very death was he glorious : for the band of men and officers, that Judas brought to take him, could not stand before him ; but as soon as he had said to them, “ I am he ; they went backward, and fell to the ground,” John xviii. 6. Nay, even at his expiring upon the cross, he exerted a power, far superior to all powers in the world : when he turned the sun into blackness, and not only rent the veil, but the rocks ; and opened graves, and made the earth to quake : such strange effects, produced by a dying man, that the very centurion, and his company, attending the execution (notwithstanding all their martial stoutness and forces) when they saw the things done, it is said, Mat. xxvii. 54. “ They feared greatly ; saying, “ Truly this was the Son of God.” The Lord of nature could not die ; but there must be such a concussion, and disorder of nature, at the prodigious spectacle. Though he would not (when urged) come down from the tree ; lest so, he should have come down in vain from heaven ; yet he did much more than that, so to affect the heavens and the earth, with his fall ; and to make that wonderful
effort

effort at his going off; which terrified all his executioners, more than they all could disturb him. And what could be more glorious in believers eyes, than his humility, meekness and patience, in all the tragedy, which he went through, for their sakes? Here was the perfect mixture of pure red and white; in his bloody, but most innocent death; which made the one compleat oblation, and illustrious sacrifice, to darken and evacuate all that had ever gone before; and accomplished that most renowned atchievement, to atone for the sins of the whole world. And so, in the midst of all the misery, did he approve himself the Lord of glory. And instead of being ashamed of Christ crucified, I may, with his apostle, Gal. vi. 14. "Glory even in the cross of Christ."

But yet more glorious was he, in leaving the world; and by his resurrection and ascension, opened the eyes of all; to see that they had crucified the Lord of Glory. When "he not only triumphed in the cross," Col. ii. 14. but vigorously broke through the grave; and in open sight, went up to his throne. "He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. i. 4. And then the eclipse was over, and the Sun of Righteousness shone forth like himself: to shew that he had all power in heaven and in earth; when he went up in triumph (dragging the powers of hell after his chariot) to sit down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, where he is worshipped by all the angels of God; and from whence he shall come, in power and great glory, to judge all the world. When every eye shall see him; and such as would not humbly own his Lordship, shall smartly feel it. Let them be never so high and great, he will be terrible, even to the kings of the earth; and shew such a Lordship over the whole creation of God, as shall endure world without

without end. For “ his throne is for ever and
 “ ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”
 O wild audacious heretics! that would spoil him
 of his glory; which glory denied by them, will
 once break out upon them, to confound them. And
 how little do the rebellious finners, that will not
 have him to reign over them, consider, against
 whom they exalt themselves, and how they oppose
 the Lord of Glory; yea, that Lord, who is also
 “ over all, God blessed for ever.”

O never may I offer to despise in my heart, him
 that died on the cross; him, in whom dwelt all the
 fulness of the Godhead bodily: and thereby, his
 personal presence in the second temple (a fabric
 much inferior to what had once been there, yet)
 made the glory of the latter house, much greater
 than that of the former, Hag. ii. 7. But let me
 “ honour the Son, even as I honour the Father.
 “ For worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive
 “ power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength,
 “ and honour, and glory,” Rev. v. 12. Let me
 honour him, not with imagery and pageantry, but
 with such a faith, as helps me to see and adore him
 in his glory. Let me look up, and behold my
 King, in the galleries of heaven; seated on the
 throne of grace, clothed with garments of salva-
 tion, and holding out the sceptre of mercy. And
 let me admire and magnify him, in my secret medi-
 tations, and in all my carriage and actions. So
 shall I find the Lord of Glory, also a Lord of Love;
 that will get him everlasting glory, in shewing the
 most sweet, and seasonable, and undeserved mercy,

THE PRAYER.

“ **T**HOU art the King of Glory, O Christ! I
 “ beseech thee, manifest thyself to me, and
 “ shew me thy glory, that I may, as I ought, ad-
 “ mire

“ mire and reverence, and adore thee. O give me
 “ the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the know-
 “ ledge of thee; that I may know thee, not only
 “ to be the Lord of Glory, and God blessed for
 “ ever; but also my Lord, and God my Saviour.
 “ O get thee glory, Lord, in relieving my misery,
 “ and working my recovery. So shall I, with the
 “ greatest satisfaction and pleasure, speak of the
 “ glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.
 “ And do thou, with thy glory and thy majesty,
 “ ride prosperously, O my heavenly King! and be
 “ thou exalted, Lord, in thy own strength: so
 “ will I sing, and praise thy power, and all thy
 “ goodness, grace, and love, now and for ever.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION XXIII.

Of the Man Jesus Christ.

WHAT one Apostle says, Acts ii. 30. “ God
 “ swore to David, that of the fruit of
 “ his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise
 “ up Christ to sit on his throne:” another Apostle
 tells us, how punctually he did fulfil it, Rom. i. 3.
 In that, “ Jesus Christ, our Lord, was made of the
 “ seed of David, according to the flesh.” And all
 the Scriptures of the New Testament do confirm it;
 that he became a man, and was not only found in
 fashion as a man, but took upon him the “ nature
 “ of man; flesh and blood, and the seed of Abra-
 “ ham,” Heb. ii. 14, 16. Though he was more
 than a man, because our Lord, and David’s too:
 (The

(The Lord of that royal parent) yea, and “thought “it no robbery, to be equal with God.” And therefore must be no less than God; even by nature as well as title. (What then are they but betrayers, rather than defenders of the Christian faith, who give up Christ’s Godhead, as the only way to prove his manhood?) Yet was he such a true man, as (in all sinless respects) was, by an infinite condescension, made so like unto us; that he is not ashamed to call us brethren. And O how rich was the grace; and how wonderful was the stoop, my soul, in him, who is over all God blessed for ever: so (as he did) to visit the world; and be born of a woman? Yea, not only to be made man; but even a worm, and no man! because a reproach of men, and despised of the people! That he would not refuse so to empty himself, nor disdain the lowest service! That when he bowed the heavens, to come down into the world; he would decline all the state and height of the world; and chose to converse with the meaner sort, and preach even to the poorest: and never but once appeared in any thing like pomp, and that only like it, upon an ass, with no trappings, but the peoples cloaths? (Such a piece of state, as many would think fit for nothing, but to be made the matter of scorn, and a jest:) yet as mean as this was, not only for the Son of God, but for the son of David: the consolation is not small, that arises from hence to thee, my soul. That thy King comes to thee so meek, and will humble himself, to imitate thy poverty; who can never equal, nor so much as comprehend, his glory. Here is the love, that baffles expression, and passeth knowledge. A love, which amazeth men and angels; that God should send his own only begotten Son, to become the Son of man, and take upon him the form of a servant.

But

But when help is indeed brought so nigh to us ; and salvation come home, even to this house of our flesh ; and the Lord himself, God with us ; and as one of us : however unworthy then, and wretched I am ; yet will not I be faithless, and desperate of relief ; nor think myself below the regard of such condescending and endearing mercy : but as I need it, so will I seek it, in hopes to find it ; seeing the Lord has glorified his compassion, in raising up so strange a salvation ; and that, when nothing but misery was our deserved portion : he has not looked so much on our ill deserts, as our deep distress : and opened a door of hope to us, even at the very lowest and worst ; by the Son of Man's coming to seek and save the lost. O what may not I then expect from such a Mediator, with whom I do partake in nature ; and who would take part of our flesh and blood, that so, he might offer himself, the atonement for our sins : and be inclined to shew the greater kindness to our souls ? Now here to invoke the man, is no offence to God : when even God the Lord, is become the Man Christ Jesus, nor is it idolatry, but my duty, to fall down at Jesus's knees, and worship him ; who did not lose his Deity, by taking upon him our humanity. But the blind men's sorrowful cry, is now a comfortable prayer ; nor any thing more proper for us, than, " Jesus, thou Son of David ! have mercy on us."

THE PRAYER.

" **O** My LORD and Saviour, who wast tempted thyself ; I beseech thee, succour the tempted. And Thou, that wast touched with the feeling of our infirmities, O pity our frailty, and relieve our misery. For, why didst thou so low debase thyself, but to raise us, out of our deep
" distress ?

“distress? O remember us, Lord, in our low estate: and behold the objects of compassion, upon which to exercise thy great salvation. Thou that didst not abhor the virgin’s womb, to succour thy miserable creatures; O do not abhor my sinful soul, that has the sorest need of thy blessed hand, to bring salvation in my wretched condition. But hear me, and help me; and have mercy upon me, and be good to me; even for thy own goodness, and thy mercy’s sake. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXIV.

Of Christ’s loving us in giving himself for us.

O My soul! did not God send his Son to be the Saviour of the world? True; it was according to his good pleasure, which he purposed with himself from everlasting. The Father was in it, and had no need to be moved to it. It was the act of his own grace and love, to send such a Redeemer. But then he did not send one that was not willing to come: nor one dissatisfied, but highly pleased with the work; and that came delighting to do the will of God in it: and “made haste, as a roe, or young hart, on the mountains of spices.” Though mountains of obstructions were in the way; yet he would over them all; and those very mountains were spicey to him; for the desire that he had to see of the travail of his soul. No painfulness in the work, nor unworthiness of those for whom he undertook it, should stop or discourage

rage him in it. Though he must lie in the womb, and in the stable, and pass under the scourge; yea, and hang on the tree; yet would he make himself of no reputation; the scorn, as well as the servant of all: and despise the shame, and not stick at the pain. No, but be straitened, till the baptism in his blood was accomplished.

Understand then, my soul, the kindness of thy friend; who unsought to, has prevented thee, with a love unthought of: when thou didst not deserve it from him, nor so much as desire it of him, but wast in enmity against him. So did he love even his enemies, as never any else loved his friends: not only to pity us in our blood, but to redeem, and heal us, with his own blood. Such wonders of love has he, whose name is WONDERFUL, shewed us: and that upon no motive, but only because he would be so kind to us. He did not only send us some tokens of his love: but came himself; yea, gave himself to us.

Now gifts are snares, to catch love: and the highest love uses to be judged by the greatest gifts. But, O! who can tell how precious is that gift, which carries in it all the unsearchable riches of Christ? in whom dwells all fulness; who is the heir, yea, the Maker of all things? And yet the creature's owner, becomes the creature's Redeemer. For he well knew, that no other gifts would answer our needs, how much soever they exceeded our deserts. Because we must have a Redeemer, or be miserable for ever. For as long as we are Christless, we are hopeless; and shall be heavenless. When nothing else, then would be significant to us; this utmost effort of the divine benignity shall not be withholden from us: such an expression of God's love, as never before was: never a higher can be. For what greater gift has God to bestow, than the Son of his love; who is coequal with himself? Such

a munificent Donor has taken upon him, to oblige us: and with such a superlative largess, has he sought to gain upon us: that to this, all the richest gifts must ever give place: and all the masters of treasure, and those of the largest hearts too, must here yield themselves, quite out-done. For in this, have we all, that is worth the having: and without this, O what have we to avail us? Nothing but what will rise up in judgment against us, and help to undo us.

What shouldst thou then desire, my soul, but that he who gave himself a ransom for all; should so give himself particularly and effectually to thee? O do thou despise all for him: and so shalt thou come to be sure of him. When his love has once won thee: thou mayest conclude then, that his blood has redeemed thee. And wilt thou not love him, that has first so loved thee; as to relieve thy misery, recruit thy poverty, repair thy ruins, and set thee up again; after thou hadst spoiled thyself? And all this without any reason; but what he drew from thy wretchedness, and his own goodness? Here, O here is the love of Christ, that carries bands and charms in it, to tie and constrain thee to love him. If thou but know and believe the love, that he has for thee; canst thou chuse, but find it work some kindly effects upon thee? Consider it, my soul, has thy dear Saviour so begun with thee? And because he loved thee, undertaken to redeem thee? Did his own love prevail with him, in such an un-exemplified manner, to do for thee? O who or what then, in comparison of him, shall be loved by thee? Who or what in the world shall ever be so dear to thee? Never leave musing here, and blowing and working at this fire; till thou hast heightened the sacred flame in thy heart. Never demur upon it; whether thou shalt love him, and give thyself to him; who has so loved thee, and given himself

himself for thee. But let him have the sweet and absolute conquest and command of all thy powers : that, when the dearest love thou hast found, such thou mayest return. And then, in the life of love, such sweets shalt thou taste, as no tongue is able to express.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD of love ! how amazing is thy love !
 “ that thou shouldest love us, only because
 “ thou wouldest love us. When thou wast un-
 “ known to us ; yea, and highly disoblighd by us.
 “ Here has love stooped to the lowest ; that the
 “ Son of God, to save us, would become as one
 “ of us, and be clothed in our flesh, that he might
 “ offer up himself for our sins. O my Lord and
 “ my God ! how have I been surpris’d by thy love,
 “ without any of my suing for it ! O may that
 “ love, so wonderful to me, shew all its wonders in
 “ me ; not only to warm, but fire my heart, and
 “ gain me over for ever, to thy blessed interests,
 “ that I may not only live, but abound in thy love,
 “ and be cherishing and increasing of it all my
 “ days. Amen, Amen.”

MEDITATION XXV.

Of Christ our ransom.

WHAT is a ransom, my soul, but a valuable consideration, or price paid for the redemption of captives ? And the ransom made by our Lord Christ, is not only such a price, as is tantamount ;

tamont; but (ἀντίλυτρον,) something given in exchange, of the same kind: as blood for blood, and life for life: the Son of God, dying in our stead, to rescue us from our deserved death. When we were fallen from God, into a state of sin, and a posture of rebellion, fettered with our lust and guilt, and delivered up to the infernal jailor, to lie in durance, under his power; and (which is worst of all) well enough pleased, to be his captives: here was a wretched state, that groaned indeed for a Redeemer; and such a Redeemer, that should be stronger than any creature, to pluck us by force, out of the strong one's hands, against his will; and also to buy us out of the hands of God's justice; with his consent, and lay down a satisfaction, to enlarge the prisoners, to the content of the detainer. It was a work, which none could stand under, but he that bears up the pillars of the earth, and the arched roof of heaven. Here was help laid on the Mighty; yea, upon one no less than Almighty. For, who but the creatures Maker and Owner, can be their Saviour and Deliverer? The Ransomer became our ransom; and the price paid was himself; who is better than a thousand worlds. And therefore are the redeemed complete in him; because the redemption was so complete, wrought by him, who was not only the Prince of Life, to restore our forfeited lives; but the Son of his Father's love, to ingratiate us with our God; yea, and coequal with the Father; and so, able to make him full amends. Yet must the surety for us, be one near to us; and therefore did he become as one of us (our ἀντίψυχοι) even changing souls with us; and by taking our debts upon himself, he made the commutation, which was a true and unexceptionable ransom for us. So did he die for us (ὑπὲρ, ἀντὶ) as not only for our good, but in our stead. He took a mortal life on himself, only to lay it down on our behalf. And
both

both the obedience, and the suffering of our surety, are (by God's gracious acceptance) as if we the sinners had performed all ourselves. Thus has the Lord bought us : and the price which he paid for us, is not only enough, to buy us off from hell ; but to purchase for us the kingdom of heaven.

Now let who will, deride this notion of a ransom ; and make exclamations, at the very mention of any such thing ; as a Just and Holy One, suffering and dying in the turn and stead of the obnoxious and guilty ; to acquit and justify the sinners and ungodly ; let who will keep the good thoughts, and high-conceit of themselves ; to see no such ruins in their souls, as call for this reparation ; nor endure to be counted such forlorn creatures, poor captives and lost sinners ; (which is not only, to fight with the gospel of our Lord, and carry, as scornful enemies of the cross of Christ ; but desperately to play the fool, in undermining their own souls ; and turn the bitterest enemies to themselves, and block up the only way of their salvation) O my soul ! do thou better understand where thy help lies. Abhor and dread the way of such proud sinners, and wild heretics. And instead of denying the Lord that bought thee, for ever bless him, that has so graciously provided for thee. When thou feelest the yoke upon thee, and the iron entering into thee, bewail thy sinful bondage, that must cost more than thou, or all the world is worth, to procure thy ransom. And then fly away into the arms of thy mighty Deliverer : who kindly invites such to him, as find themselves ready to perish without him. And though thou canst give nothing towards thy own ransom, yet be not desperate, upon the prospect of thy disability ; because he has left thee nothing to pay, but only to accept of his purchase.

And

And while thou dost not believe the ransom, to profane it, in taking thyself so to be turned loose by it, as if thou hadst nothing to do with Jesus, but to make him the patron of all thy wicked presumptions; (having got such a one to help thee out) as long as thou dost not, I say, so mistake the Holy One of God, nor forget that end of his death, to save thee from thy sins: (like those that dash themselves against the very rock of salvation; as if resolved to perish, after all that has been done by the Saviour) O make him thy only trust and refuge; whenever thou art pursued and affrighted. Having found the Messias, in whom God has found a ransom; gladly embrace him, and take up with him. Make nothing else thy confidence, but there place all thy dependence. This way go thou to work, whoever think better to secure themselves another way. Thy faith in Christ, which they nothing but slight, prize thou it, as the richest of all thy wealth. And upon his death and ransom, build all thy hope and consolation.

THE PRAYER.

“ **B**LESSED JESUS! thou art my only hope;
 “ my peace, my life, my all. Whither else
 “ should I go? To whom else should I repair? I
 “ have no other reserve: no other stay, nor place
 “ of rest. I dare not trust to any thing that I can
 “ do, who have no power of my own, but only to
 “ destroy myself: nor must I repose in any thing
 “ this world can do for me, which will sooner help
 “ to ruin than to save me. O my only Saviour!
 “ with thee I fix: and by thy ransom, will I ever
 “ abide. I have sold and lost myself; but thou hast
 “ bought and redeemed my soul. O take me into,
 “ thy

“thy care: and let me receive redemption at thy
“hands. Thou that gavest thyself for me, give
“thyself also to me: and be my full ransom, and
“my everlasting salvation. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXVI.

Of universal redemption.

THAT our Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, is the general voice of his Word, and what I do believe in my heart. For no defect could there be in his redemption, but the virtue and value was sufficient to save all the world, even in the widest extent. And effectual also it will prove, to save all manner of persons, *i. e.* some of all sorts: and all of every sort, that repent and believe, and live godly in Christ Jesus: and absolutely, all of that lesser world, within the bigger; whereof Abraham was the heir. All his church, all his body, all his sheep and his friends; all the chosen, and children of God: and all that ever shall be saved in the world. Nor can I complain, my soul, that I am left out: let me be never so great a sinner, if I am but a believer. Forasmuch as the saving benefit of this redemption, is sure to every one that accepts and embraces the Saviour: whatever be their circumstances, to recommend, or to depress them, here in the world: those distinctions among men, are of no consideration at all with the Lord. But even such as some would not count worth one of their good looks, he might think worth the buying with
his

his most precious blood ; yea, worthy to live with him for ever, in his glorious kingdom. All (if they will) may have it : but some shall be made sure of it. I say not, whether they will or not : for they shall be willing in the day of God's power : that our Lord may not be disappointed, but free of the travail of his soul ; and the children which God has given him, raised, not out of man's will ; but, of the good pleasure of the bestower. That he might not die in vain for them ; he has secured all the benefits of his death to them, making them such by his grace as he would have them. And so keeps them by his power, that they may not be plucked out of his hands, but enjoy the whole of his everlasting purchase.

But, as I dread to derogate from the glory of divine mercy, to narrow the redemption of our Lord, or make the little flock less than it is, or check the hopes of any that find but the least encouragement, to put in for their share in the glorious advantage : so I dare not stretch and widen the redemption, to raise unreasonable expectations, and so deceive the presumers, in emboldening them to look for more than they are like to find. Which I think I should do, did I understand it in the latitude of such as take it to comprehend indifferently and alike, all the particular members of mankind ; and to be for each in the same manner. For, were it so designed, how then could any fail of the blessed fruit, but God would miss of his purpose ; and Christ lose a part of his purchase ? And yet how can the Almighty ever be hindered, of any thing by him intended ? How can I imagine, that our Lord came, only to to make his redeemed releasable, and saveable ; and to leave it so in their hands, that it should be all at their disposal, whether ever he had a church, or a soul, to himself ? That his poor creatures might so break all his measures ? Canst thou believe, my soul,
that

that our great Redeemer's Consummatum est, is come to this, for his work to be done by halves? And all grown fortuitous, and in danger to come to nothing, and most men set up for principles, who do the most for themselves, after he has but only put a price into their hands? Yea, can they do all so compleat; as not only to make room for the boasting that they have made themselves to differ; but gone partners with the Saviour? Shall men be counted such arbitrators, and disposers of Christ's grace, and make up what he has left wanting, in the application of redemption? Has he not already done whatever is needful, to ensure all his redeemed's salvation? Has he left it in their hands, to defeat the whole work; that he shall have his ends, only if they please: and the turning of the scale must belong only to themselves? When indeed, the very terms of salvation are of his own giving, as well as proposing: and we, (alas!) can as soon create a world; as believe, or move towards Christ and heaven, of ourselves; without his grace, to work both the will and the deed in us, and for us.

"All that the Father hath given him, shall come to him," John vi. 37. He laid down his life for them, and he will not be disappointed of them. But yet, my soul, may not one "destroy the brother for whom Christ died?" Rom. xiv. 15. He may indeed, be said to do it, who does as much as in him lies towards it, though he is not able actually to accomplish it. As the man is said, to have committed adultery with a woman in his heart; when he has gone as far as he can: but wants power, to effect his wicked purpose. And thus also may some be said to "deny the Lord that bought them," 2 Pet. ii. 1. when they reject the world's Redeemer, who alone can save them, yea, who has given the ransom sufficient for all, without any exception. And who knows, but he may have given that,

which is effectual also for them. And so may those very abnegators, repent and turn, (with Peter, who denied his Lord,) that the event shall declare, he has indeed done it for them. Every man, for whom Christ tasted death, Heb. ii. 9. is every capable subject, every sanctified soul, every son, that he brings to glory, ver. 10, 11. Yea, as he did and suffered, what was of value enough, to save every sinner in the world: so, what shall certainly avail to save every, even the greatest and the worst of sinners that comes to him. But then, does not himself tell us, John vi. 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him?"

And how can that redemption be intended alike for all, which is not applied, no, nor so much as offered to some at all? And where some are said to be redeemed from among men, (out of the rest,) Rev. v. 9. and xiv. 15. Is it all one with them still, as with those that are left behind; to whom the word of this salvation is not sent; and they are not brought within that better covenant, whereof Christ is the surety? Is he alike their Redeemer, as of any others? Is he alike the surety for all sinners? What sinner then should ever bear the curse and punishment of his sin? (As many a one yet must do for ever.) Is it through their own fault and unbelief, that so many do fall short of the salvation, obtained by our Lord Redeemer? It is true, their destruction is of themselves: because they will not have eternal life on God's terms. Yet this notwithstanding, had Christ undertaken their salvation, he would then have surely brought them up to the condition, and have set and kept them in the way to his kingdom. And I cannot think, that he would only have opened a door to them, which they should not enter, nor have suspended all, upon such conditions, as he would not enable them to perform. His redemption,

tion, I believe, and admire, as so complete an achievement, that it secures to the redeemed, whatever is needful to make them for ever happy. And they that lay it lower, draw a cloud over its comfort, as well as its honour. For as it is the glory of Christ's grace, to out-do the sin of Adam : not in the extent; (which it could not do: because no redemption can take in more than all; which were the number lost;) but to out-do it, in the force and efficacy, as proving too hard for that outdoing sin, and producing better and more glorious effects, conquering all the difficulties, recovering out of all the dangers, and bringing life even from the dead; so this is the strong consolation to a soul in its distressed condition: not to be told, that Christ died alike for all; (when yet so many do perish,) for what repose, what comfort, canst thou take, my soul, in that argument, which lies in common to all, the saved and the lost? but to hear of a Redeemer, that brings me power and grace, to fulfil my duty, and to fit me for his glory; yea, to confirm me in a station, beyond the danger of apostacy: O what can so revive my heart? What can so establish and cheer thee, O my soul?

And though I know, who cry up the other doctrine; (that gains many friends every where, for looking so plausible on that corrupt nature, which loves to be flattered:) and how great a flourish is made, to magnify the influence that it has upon a holy good life: I should be glad to see more of these effects, and wish, that they who make the grace so large, had a larger share of it, to shew in themselves; yea, that here, some of the stiffest pleaders, were not some of the worst livers: maintaining that Christ died for all; and the while, carrying, as if he died for none at all. It is well, if their fancy do not throw a bridge so wide, over the gulph of destruction; as if none could miss it: and so, tempt
many

many to go too broad; and tread beside it, till they miscarry and perish in their presumption of that which is not to be found. When the bare persuasion of Christ's dying for all, gives the wicked a confidence to be saved, as well as any, how careless then, can they grow of their souls; till they pull a certain ruin on their heads? And still keep in their unbelief, upon the conceit of their own ability, whenever they will, to work it off.

O my soul! shall not the miscarrying of so many, awaken me into a greater care and piety? And yet after all that I have done, still shall I be a stranger to faith and holiness in truth; if I go not to seek them of Christ Jesus, as a part of his purchase. For who but the Holy One of God, can make me holy? And what so like, as faith in him, to beget the fruits pleasing to him? O may I walk as his redeemed! and like one redeemed from sin, as well as from hell, may I find his redemption, even at present begun, and going on in me: and live like one redeemed from the earth; and from the love, and power of all iniquity: and then for all that is yet wanting, (to compleat his blessed work upon me,) I will seek to him, and believe in him, and call upon him, who has already done so much for me, to perfect all that yet concerns me.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** THOU that art the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe! give me, Lord, the faith in thee that shall bring me to thee: and make me secure in thy blessed hands, and partaker of thy great salvation. O make me to know, that thou hast loved me, with an everlasting love: and send thy peace, to dwell in my heart, and say to my soul, that thou art my salvation. That the redemption, sufficient in itself, may be found effectual

“ effectual in my case; to deliver me from the servitude and curse of my sins: and to enstate me in the everlasting kingdom, purchased by my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Amen.”

MEDITATION XXVII.

Of the flock of Christ.

WHAT should be the reason, my soul, that our Lord is pleased to give himself the name of a shepherd; and to call his people his flock, and the sheep of his fold? Is it because of our wandering humour; that, like the sheep, we are so apt to go astray? and not knowing when we are well, within his enclosures; we must be breaking out, and rambling abroad; though still, at our peril, and to our damage? This indeed is a reason, to our shame and grief. But better reasons there are, both from the shepherd, and from his sheep; for our instruction, and our consolation. From himself;] Because as a shepherd, he chooses, and cares, and provides for us, always better than we should, or could do, for ourselves: that we may go in and out, and find pasture, even all agreeable entertainments; with great plenty, and sweet variety, both for soul and body.

Again, from his sheep,] Because as such, they do hear his voice, and follow him. When they flee from a stranger, they will be at the finding and disposal of their own shepherd. And this hearkening to his word, and rejection all contrary doctrines, is as the ear-mark of Christ's sheep. Besides which, they have also, what we may call the wool-mark, i. e. as sheep, bearing fleeces; not only to hide their own nakedness, but for the benefit also of others; they are clad with the righteousness of Christ, and they

they bear much fruit, to his glory : being hurtful to none : though receiving injury from many ; but making all about them the better for them. And as the sheep, that are clean creatures, and will not feed on carrion, or any thing that is filthy : so do they love God's word ; because it is pure, and are all for holy things, and pious company. Not, like the beasts of the people ; for wallowing in the mire ; and swallowing with greediness the devil's baits : but their diet is finer, their pleasures purer, their appetites better affected, to all that is holy and heavenly. And yet further, as sheep that are congregating creatures, they are not for moping by themselves, but for joining to their Lord's disciples, and turn not aside, by the flocks of his companions. They love the brethren, and seek the communion of saints, and gather to the shepherd's tents and pastures, where he imparts himself, and feeds his flock. While dogs and wolves separate from them ; hold not to them, nor care to come among them, unless it be, to worry and devour them.

O my soul ! by such criterions as these, let me try myself, whether I am one of the flock, and the sheep of my Lord's pasture. Are my ears open, to receive his word with gladness ; and to learn his pleasure, that I may do it ? Am I harmless, and useful, and good for somewhat, like the profitable sheep, that live not only to themselves, but clothe, and feed and pleasure many ? Do I nauseate the entertainments of corrupt communication, and filthy conversation, and delight in such clean feeding, as the sheep ? Do I relish the holy spiritual food, that shall nourish my soul to life eternal ? And do not I shun the flock of Christ, nor jar with them ; nor snarl at them ; but incline to them, and engage among them, and love to be with them ? These are such properties, in which I may much encourage and comfort myself, when I find them to be my own.

For

For though sheep are poor weak creatures, lying open to hurts and dangers: and it commonly expresses the miserable state of a forlorn people, to be as sheep without a shepherd; yet O how happy are the Lord's people, in their heavenly shepherd? How may they rejoice in him, as he is pleased to set forth himself? Ezek. xxxiv. 12, — 16. Seeking out the scattered to deliver and reduce them, and fold, and feed them; and tender over the broken and sick, to bind up, and strengthen them. The sheep often may be, but the shepherd never can be overcome. Yea, in him they are safe from destruction, though in the world they have tribulation. Not safe for their numbers, or their own worthiness, but thro' his power and favour; and that sure word of his promise, John x. 28. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish: neither shall any pluck them out of my hands."

O my soul, in what care should I be, to keep still to this flock? And in what fear, ever to straggle from them? When the Lord is with them; and always watchful over them; so that no want or woe can be to them, but salvation for certain shall be their portion. Whoever then malign, and despise them, above all else in the world, I prefer them: I affect, and favour them, I prize and admire them. And may I ever stick to them, and fickle for them, and have my own happy lot with them.

THE PRAYER.

"**B**LESSED be thy name, O my heavenly Shepherd! that thou art pleased to take that dear appellation to thyself; so to espouse the care of thy poor flock; and make such provision for their safety and felicity, both here and for ever. O that I may be found among them; and be one of the sheep, that now follow thee, in thy holy church;

times lightens my heart, alas, how often is it darkened, by the sense of former sins; and the guilt of many a new transgression; that makes me call in question all my safe condition? And where I ought to be tender and favourable in the judgment, which I pass upon others, I may make boldest with myself, and should suspect the worst, of my own state, where I hope the best of theirs.

Yet must I not forget, what the Lord has done for me, nor disown his grace in me; when I know the time and way of such workings in my soul; as effected a remarkable change upon me, not only as to my sentiments and apprehensions of things, but in the taste and relish of my spiritual appetite; and in the drift and conduct of my life and carriage, which I hoped to be the happy change, that I am now considering. But had I no such memorials and way-marks, in my passage through this world, to look back upon; yet from any fair crop, that I saw in the field, I might conclude, there had been due cultivation so to bring it to pass. And where I found but the fruits of the Spirit, might infer, that a heavenly friend had done this; and look upon it, as the opening of God's everlasting love to my soul; and a comfortable evidence of my adoption, into the number of his children, whom he has appointed the heirs of his kingdom. And then, O how can I ever enough admire the riches of such grace, that so makes me to differ, and thee, my soul, (above vast multitudes,) so to prosper. For though I esteem others better than myself, and so I do, even those that are counted much worse than myself: for I think that they, (if in my circumstances) might have been, and would have done better: yet must I not complement them so, as to believe that every one is in a better state than myself, but conclude my own, (through divine mercy,) to be such as I would not for a world change with some: and yet all the while,

while, take nothing but sin and shame to myself; and give to God only, the whole wherein I do excel any. And O, what thanks and praise and glory, can I ever give him sufficient, who of his mere, and utterly unmerited love, has put me in a state, so much to be preferred; even before the most desired, envied, or admired state else in the world; for would I change estates with the gayest sinner; with the wealthiest miser, with the highest man of honour; with the jolliest man of pleasure, with the biggest king or emperor, if he be one that lies in his blood, void of Christ's Spirit and grace, rejected of the Lord, and having all his portion in this life? O my soul! thou knowest better things; to make thee scorn any such offer. Thy God has done more than all that all these have to boast of for thee. O value thyself then chiefly, upon his love in Christ, to thee. With all the highest thankfulness, acknowledge this richest mercy: and let it be thy continual care, to walk answerably.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY God! hast thou past by so many, that
 “ are destitute of thy renewing grace; to look
 “ with an eye of saving mercy upon such a wretch
 “ as myself? To fetch me out of my natural condition,
 “ into a state of salvation? O what manner
 “ of love is this, that I should be called thy child,
 “ and owned in so near and blessed a relation, to the
 “ glorious majesty of heaven! I am unworthy,
 “ Lord, utterly unworthy. The honour is too
 “ high for me to mention, but not too great, for
 “ the infinitely good to vouchsafe. O what shall I
 “ return? what shall I say? how shall I carry? nothing
 “ can I offer, fit for my great Lord to receive.
 “ Glory to God in the highest. O let all before thy

“ thy throne above, give thee the glory, which I cannot. Give me, I beseech thee, a due sense of thy mercy; and fill my heart with thy love and praise, and with such grace, as shall enable me to carry, as becomes thy redeemed, and called and adopted in Jesus Christ, Amen.”

MEDITATION XXIX.

Of my relation to God, as his Child.

O MY soul! what are all the creatures, that fill this world, but the offspring of God, derived from him, as the common parent of the universe? But further than so, rational souls have a particular concern in the honour of filiation to God; as he is peculiarly stiled the Father of spirits. And yet beyond this, is there another sense; much more to my satisfaction and comfort; wherein some men do stand allied to God, as his children: and that is, by adoption, and regeneration. Adoption does not indeed find any right, but gives it; and makes a title by donation; where was none by descent and propagation. For how, by an act of mere grace, can children of wrath ever become the Children of God? Thus then has he respect to the unworthy; and accepts them in the beloved; who have nothing in themselves to deserve it. Like as the rich man takes up a poor body's child: to write him down for his heir, so does the gracious Lord, sometimes adopt even the meanest and so worst, for the objects of dearest love, and the recipients of his choicest blessings, Not at all, for any of their merits, but only because so he will have it. Yet, as the rich man makes that poor

poor child, (by education and ornaments,) quite another thing, than he found him; much more does he, that has a creating power, effect to make his adopted meet for the posts, to which he advances them: when the forlorn creatures, that he looked upon in their blood, he cleanses and adorns, and by regeneration, so transforms them, that they are other manner of persons: and not only, make another figure; but become really better, renewed after the image of their heavenly Father: and as they bear the name of his children, so do become that character.

And has the Lord, with such favour, remembered me, O my soul? Not only to discharge me of my guilt, and deliver me from the curse, but to enroll me in his family; and that, not as a servant, but a child? (Though to be a servant of the most High God, is a privilege highly to be prized, above all dignities in the world, yet) will he that is for making a man, so accumulate his benefits, as raise me to sit down among his children. O how stupendous is this love! how high the honour! how rich the advantage! how sweet the pleasure! even the sons of noblemen, are ready to be adored, as rising suns; but how much more worthy and wonderful, are the children of the King of kings! let them make never so poor an appearance now in the world, yet cannot all the sons of honour, reach to comprehend the surpassing glory, wherewith they shall be crowned, world without end. And however they may be dieted and limited here, in their nonage: yet are they all heirs of a king; and sure of their inheritance, that shall not only answer, but exceed all their largest desires: and hold out still the same, without ever waxing any less or worse. And O how may they be comforted, that are so provided? they may set their hearts at rest, that are in such sure hands, let what will threaten them, their Father will take care of them.

them. And let the worst that can here befall them ; their God will make it work for good to them. He will pity them, and relieve them at present : and after, set them up, and glorify them for ever. This is the portion of God's children. Such delight may they take in him, so great things may they expect from him.

But had I never such favour and friends in the world, a name with the best, and estate, to vie with the wealthiest ; yet would all, (alas !) but turn to my snare and curse, to have such a portion of good things in this life, and no part or lot among the children of God. When as none but his children, can be heirs ; and none but the heirs shall inherit his kingdom. And then would no heaven be for me, were none of the holy change past upon me. So, that whoever slight the children of God, and admire only the great ones of this world ; never let me be ambitious of any name or title, or dignity ; but only to be found among them, that shall hear from our Lord in the last day, " Come ye blessed children of my Father."

THE PRAYER.

" **B**LESSED God ! against whom I have so greatly sinned, that I am utterly unworthy to be called thy child, or ever to be owned in any such happy relation to the most High. Forgive me, I beseech thee, and receive me, in thy dearly beloved, who alone is worthy, for whose sake, thou shouldest shew such favour to me. Though I have not carried as a dutiful child, yet pity and spare me, O my God ! and be good to me ; and provide for me, as a merciful father. And so secure me, Lord, to thyself, that I may be still thy child, accepted in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

MEDITATION XXX.

Of the sense of our adoption.

THOUGH some of God's own dear children may often be forward to disinherit themselves, and to reason away their hopes ; because they have not attained to the plerophory, and confident persuasion of their secure and happy station ; they may live long in dread ; yea, and go off doubtful at last ; yet what they are clouded from seeing, it lies before them ; yea, though they put it from them, it belongs to them. And however others may but dream, when they think themselves to be awake ; they may mistake, and be confident ; yet what does this hinder, my soul, but that I may know myself to be awake, and be sure that I am in the right ? Could I not be sensible of my adoption, then should I not bear that reproach, for not knowing my condition, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. " What, know you not your " ownelves ? " Which upbraids my ignorance here, and throws it upon me as my fault. For " the " spirit of a man (if advertent) may know the " things of a man : " whether he be alive or dead ; sincere, or play the hypocrite. " He that believes, " has the witness in himself ; and may know, that " he has eternal life," 1 John v. 10, 13. " How " else could the heirs of the promise, have that " strong consolation," Heb. vi. 18. It would be but poor comfort, only to believe in general, the forgiveness of sins : and that they are in the good state, from whence they may soon fall. But here
lies

solations of God be cheap to me; but most highly valued, and warily preserved by me. Let his joy be my strength; and his enlargement of my heart, an engagement upon my heart, to abound in his work. Though, after all that I myself have wrought, 'tis nothing but the faith of his fatherly love, in Christ Jesus, that can ever settle my conscience in solid peace: and give to thee, my soul, a comfortable rest.

THE PRAYER.

“ **I** AM unworthy, LORD; I am sinful, and
 “ deserve only thy wrath and indignation: but
 “ thou art the Father of mercies, and the God of
 “ all grace and consolation. O respect not my ill-
 “ deservings; but thy own tender compassions.
 “ And for the sake of thy dear Son, be reconciled
 “ to me, and cause thy face to shine upon me. Let
 “ me feel thy grace, working in my heart; and
 “ perceive thy love, laid open to my soul. O give
 “ me the Spirit of sanctification, to renew me after
 “ thy holy image; and make me a follower of thee,
 “ as a dear child: and give me also the Spirit of
 “ adoption, that I may cry, Abba, Father; and get
 “ such a testimony of conscience, as shall be my re-
 “ joicing: to make me rejoice in hope of the glory
 “ of God; and comfortably to pass through my
 “ pilgrimage in thy love, and delight myself in the
 “ Lord, all the days of my life; through the me-
 “ rits and mediation of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

 THE FOURTH DECADE.

MEDITATION XXXI.

Of God's warnings given to the world.

THOUGH it is not the usual course of God's providence now, to give such particular and express warning of his approaching judgments, as he did to his servant Noah, before the drowning of the world; yet has he not, even in these last days, left himself without witness among us. But still we have such signs of the times, and monitors of so many sorts, as may quicken us with the greatest solicitude, to attend what does so nearly and highly concern us. For before God inflicts the evil, he uses to give those previous indications, of which, men not quite blinded, and hardened, cannot chuse but take notice. And by such patience, and precautions, does he approve, both his justice, and his mercy, before he proceeds to the execution of his wrath, that men may not complain, they were not alarmed by any summons, to prevent the danger. The Lord will call heaven and earth to witness, that they were warned, again and again. And from hence then will grow the aggravation of their misery, to reflect on their security and obstinacy, in despising all the warning, which was given for prevention of their ruin: that they might hear and fear, and believe and turn; and not be plagued with the judgments denounced.

Observe

Observe then these warnings of God, my soul; sometimes by his works, and such preternatural effects in the creation, as do set nature's frame in a trembling disorder. Though doctrines and inferences are not rashly to be drawn from such texts; nor can I think myself obliged to credit what every astrologer has to prognosticate, upon the appearance of a comet, or any aspects of planets: yet some strange things there are, which surely God does not work in the heaven above, and the earth beneath; only to be gazed at, or talked of; but speaks in them, to such as may rue it, not to heed them. But by his Word, my soul, thou hearest more plainly, the Lord warning, and telling, what will become of all those, that go on still despising and provoking. The Ministers of his Word are his watchmen, to cry aloud, and acquaint men of their sin and their danger. And how fearful is the prognostic, to such as are stupid and regardless, of all the application thus made to them?

Yet further, thou art warned, my soul, by the carriage of things in mens lives; and the posture of public affairs; when prodigious sins cry for judgments, and a perplexed case presages ruin. When blasphemy and the vilest wickedness is grown, not only daring, but fashionable: and despite commonly done to the Spirit of Grace; and all his blessed work upon the soul made but a matter of derision, and holy admonitions turned into ridicule, and the mercies of the Lord into meat for mens' lusts: and the power of religion is so worn away, that little but a form, and the carcase of Christianity remains. O what cause then to fear, that God will lay waste the vineyard; when the Christian name is so profaned by them that carry at such a Heathenish rate! and that he will avenge the honour of his truth, so set at naught; in judgments worthy of God! And when the Lord sends among a people, the spirit of
distraction,

distraction, to corrode the sinews of their councils, and makes them ready to devour one another with intestine quarrels : here is a sad omen of desolating plagues advancing; and a clamorous call in the ears of all, to cast out the cursed things ; that enflame the Lord's indignation. For even in such a desponding condition, yet by repentance, we may find recovery and safety. But such as do make a scorn of this method : and think of any ways, rather than this, to save themselves : a hand from heaven will break their measures ; and the dreadful execution, confound them, with their politics. For sinners incurable by warnings, will be overtaken by the denounced judgments : and nothing does it bode to them, but a certain destruction, when they disregard, whatever is offered for their good instruction.

O then, my soul, let me not be in the guilt of their madness ; who put away the only means of their preservation, from them, when wrath from the Lord is gone out against them. Let me not take up with the reserves, that will deceive my hopes : nor flatter myself, that either the bitterness is past, or that I shall find a way to escape, though it come to the worst ; because I have little to lose ; or when trials come, I intend to be so wise, as to comply with any thing that may save my worldly effects. Nor let me presume of nothing but mercy at the Lord's hands, after I have all along stood it out against his Word. But the warning that he is pleased to give, O let me be so wise, as to take. The issues that he foretels, let me believe ; and the work that he appoints, let me set about. And then, in the failing of all other helps, yet shall I find a sure friend : whose Word I took, and whose ways I followed : and being warned of God, fled from the dreadful ruin ; which will swallow up all the unbelieving and the hardened, that would not be warned and reclaimed,

THE

THE PRAYER.

“ **B**LESSED be the mercy, which gives me
 “ warning of the evils impending; that I may
 “ be delivered from them, or fortified against them.
 “ It is of thy gracious favour, O Lord, that I have
 “ space to repent, and any way to escape: and that
 “ I am not already feeling, all that my sins do give
 “ me too much cause to fear. O let thy warnings
 “ be to me, in mercy; and let them quicken and
 “ engage me, without delay, to the faithful per-
 “ formance of my duty. That I may not hold to
 “ any perilous path, in which I would dread to be
 “ found: nor make bold to carry on the practices
 “ or designs, which thou warnest me to leave; but
 “ by departing from iniquity, may I provide for
 “ my safety; and by a lively faith, and holy life,
 “ fly into the arms of my Saviour; and find all
 “ seasonable protection, and sweet consolation, with
 “ my God blessed for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXXII.

Of fearing the deserved evils.

THAT fear which clogs the wheels of action,
 and casts me into the consternation, which
 unfits me for my duty; yea, that drives me from
 God, and makes me dread to attend upon the Lord:
 such wicked mischievous fear, my soul, thou art
 ever to be afraid of, and to harden thyself against.
 But yet there is another kind of fear, which thou
 canst

canst never do well without : and that is, such a fear of the great God, as obliges thee still to observe him ; whatever be the success here in this world. And such a fear also of future evils, as is thy centinel and preservative, to secure thee from them. For so, it is happy to fear. Yea, they are no better than mad, that will not be thus afraid. " When the lion hath roared, who will not fear ? " Amos iii. 8. When God's judgments are going their round in the world, is it not time then, for the inhabitants (in his fear) to learn righteousness ? Dead asleep are they in their sins, that will not be roused with the thunder of his judgments. And they that are most fearless, before the evil reaches them, are likeliest to be consumed with terrors, when it is upon them. But whoever so fears, as to keep off from the evil of sin, shall dwell at ease, from the tormenting fear of punishment. And when God is my fear, man is not. But fearing the Lord as I ought ; I shall " cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils : " nor only cease from such, as to the trusting in them ; but also, from being afraid of them : because I see a higher and dreadfuller above ; than the highest or greatest here on earth. And then, " as Moses feared not the wrath of the king, seeing him that " was (to eyes of flesh) invisible," Heb. xi. 27. So shall I disregard all, that looks frightful in the world, when I have my eyes upon the infinite, all-disposing God, whose poor creatures are all those, that would make me afraid : who has them at his beck, to order them as he sees good ; and will make all work for good, to them that fear the Lord.

I am sure, there is nothing so fearful as to fall into the hands of the living God ; nor need I fear any that can but kill the body ; as long as I keep in with him, that has the disposal of soul and body, to all eternity. Though the highest ingenuity is, indeed, to fear the Lord for his goodness ; yet, is the su-
preme

preme King of all the world (that is terrible, not only to the people, but to the kings of the earth) to be feared also, for his judgments. And let me say to thee, my soul, as the penitent did to his fellow-sufferer upon the cross; "Dost thou not fear God, when thou art in the same condemnation?"

When thou canst not deny, but it would be just with God, to make the calamitous case of others my own: shall I not then fear him, whom my sins do give such advantage against me? And to tremble at his righteous judgments; what is it, but to copy out the fear commended, Heb. xi. 7. with which Noah being moved, provided for that which God threatened, to bring upon the world. Though I would not then, heighten the ghastly dread, which should so sneak thee, my soul, that thou couldest not act like thyself; nor fill thee with the fear, that should enervate thy ability for any worthy offices: I would not have thee to look upon God, as a severe Being, known only by his fire, and instruments of destruction; and ever and anon watching for occasion, to strike, and execute vengeance. For such thoughts do no less blaspheme God, than wrong thyself. When the same thing which his Word says, Thou canst tell by abundant experience of thy own; that he is slow to anger, and long forbears, and waits to be gracious; that his goodness may lead sinners to repentance.

Yet, because the holy God, perfectly hates all the sinful evil, and he that bears long with such as provoke him, will not do it always: but there is a day of grace, that will be past: and a time, when his patience will be at an end; yea, and turn into sharp fury, upon the abusers of mercy: therefore have I reason to fear God, for what he may, in greatest justice, bring upon me; to make so great a sinner, as great a sufferer. Because judgments denounced (where repentance prevents not) will certainly be inflicted;

inflicted. And he that hardens his heart, shall fall into mischief, by despising the means to prevent it; and not enduring such as would save him from it: being not only past feeling, but enraged at all that would recover his sense. Yet as long as I have eyes open to see the evil, and a heart tender to resent it; (but also with a Christian fortitude, hold on in the way of my duty, fearing God, and working righteousness); boldly then may I trust the issues of things, in his blessed hands, to whom they belong; and not perplex myself, with the dread of any thing that comes upon me, to undo me: but whatever I may here, for a while, endure; persuade myself, that the God, who has ever been doing me good, will bear me up under the cross, and help me through with it; and after I am past it, make me the better, and for ever the happier, for it.

THE PRAYER.

“**R**IGHTEOUS art Thou, O LORD! and just
 “ (yet terrible) are thy judgments, which I
 “ have too much cause to fear, for all my abuses of
 “ thy mercies. Doleful is the prospect, to look for-
 “ ward, upon the due desert of such sins, whereof
 “ I have been guilty. Nothing then but blackness
 “ of darkness, and flames of fiery indignation are
 “ before me; yet will I not give up my hopes, nor
 “ yield to a sinking despondency, when I consider
 “ with what a God I am concerned, that is so rich,
 “ and abundant in mercy, and has given me so
 “ large and sweet and constant experience of it al-
 “ ready. O be still my gracious God: and con-
 “ tinue thy fatherly care over me for good. And
 “ prepare me, Lord, even for the worst of times
 “ and cases. Let me still find thy presence with
 Vox. II. Q. “ me;

“ me ; thy help at hand to assist me, and the light
 “ of thy countenance shining upon me ; even in the
 “ midst of trouble, to revive me : that I may not only
 “ with patience bear it, but bless and praise thee
 “ for it. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXXIII.

Of preparing for the evil time.

O MY soul ! how large a share has the gracious God dealt out to me of his good things, and comfortable enjoyments, here upon earth ! How have I abounded and flourished, with his blessings, even of all sorts ! when health, and peace, plenty and liberty, friends and credit in the world, have been my familiar acquaintance, my old and usual companions : how much has my Lord made me to differ from many ; yea, the most about me ; that are not so well provided, as I have been ! and how vast is the number, every where ; that are destitute of the pleasant and plentiful accommodations, which I have had ! but that prosperity whereof I have enjoyed so long experience ; I must not expect, in its perpetual continuance. No ; the sweet sun, in whose rays I have hitherto basked and solaced myself, will, ere long, be wrapped up in dark clouds ; yea, at last, so set, as to rise no more. Those many sad plaintiffs that I have heard, and such multitudes of miserable objects that I see all about me, almost every where, they are warning pieces, to advertise me, of my slippery standing ; and give me to understand ; that my turn is coming ; and how soon their
 their

their case may be my own. For, O what am I better than they? And what assurance have I, greater than any other? When so frail is my state, and so foul are my sins: what is it but the wonder of God's mercy, that I have so escaped all this while? But so to escape still, or long; I am not to presume. For a change with me, and a great alteration of the case, there will certainly be. And what dost thou know, my soul, how quickly my health will be turned into sickness, my ease into pain, my wealth into want, my credit into reproach, my prosperity into calamity; yea, my life into death? And when I shall so sore be put to it, and tried to the very quick; that I may not sink then, in my spiritual, as well as in my temporal estate: O how highly does it concern thee, my soul, to look out; and take care, in time, to provide for thy security? As Noah, when warned of God, that the deluge was coming; moved with fear, prepared a vessel, for the safety of himself and his family. And what is the ark, where thou canst be sure, my soul; but only with thy Christ, out of whom there is no salvation? And to them in him, there is no condemnation. Never canst thou find rest for the sole of thy foot, out of this ark. But however thou be tossed and threatened, no winds or waves, sands or rocks, can ever split and ruin thee, embarking with thy Saviour. Here then I must examine my state; to see upon what sure grounds I am, as to my being in him: and (resolving to quit all other refuges and pretensions;) trust only to what has been done and undergone by him: and in his merits and promises, in his righteousness and satisfaction, made for my sins, place all my hopes and strong consolation. So that come what will, nothing shall drive me out of the strong hold; this sure retreat. But to Jesus I will look; on him I will rely, and in him I will believe, for the remission

sion of all my sins, and for the eternal salvation of my soul. And thus keep up still in heart and hope; though stript out of all else: as long as I have the only begotten and beloved of the Father, for my Lord and my God, my strength and my Redeemer.

Thus must I take the shield of faith for my defence, against all darts, and patiently follow such a blessed leader, bearing my cross, and despising the troubles, as well as the pleasures of the world, so that I may but win Christ, and secure my heavenly interests, and my eternal glorious inheritance, in his gracious hands. And so must I accustom myself to the throne of grace, that I may not then be at the saddest loss, when I am to seek unto him that, can alone relieve me, in the time of my sorest distress. Yea, with all my utmost care and endeavour, must I keep off from every presumptuous sin and wicked way, that would check my faith, and damp my prayers; and so penitent must I be for past miscarriages, and so cautious to walk henceforth in my integrity before the Lord; that I may find a friend of him, who searches my heart; that he may look upon me, and take me up, when past all other help; and I may be bold in my God, when every refuge else fails me in the world.

Whatever then, my soul, is like to prove bitterness in the latter end, and would kill my heart, and sink me into despair, when distress and anguish comes upon me, and all the waves and billows of affliction are going over me: O let me dread it, and shun it; even as death and hell. And (however I am tempted to it) have nothing to do with it. But renounce, and detest, and resist the cursed thing; that would render the trying time, and my last scene insupportable; which it should be all the business of my life, to make easy and comfortable.

THE PRAYER.

“ **H**OLY glorious GOD, whom I have grievously offended! thou knowest my careful heart, and my appalled mind; in fear of the heavy plagues, which thou mightest justly inflict. Though hitherto, thou hast not only spared me, in all my sins; but refreshed and comforted me on every side, with thy sweet mercies; yet is my expectation still more saddened, by the remembrance of all that patience and goodness, which I have so much abused. For I know, that thou, O Lord, wilt take me in hand, and bring me into judgment; and O what shall I say; what shall I do, when under the fiery trial? I fear before thee: I humble myself unto thee. O prepare me for thy approaches to me: and bear me up under all, that thou shalt bring upon me. Remember none of my sins against me; nor hide thy face from me, when trouble overwhelms me; but let me find the Lord reconciled to me, and present with me; and my Saviour so appearing for me; that though I walk through the vale of the shadow of death, I may fear no evil, to undo me. And whatever shall be thy visitation, Lord, help me past it, with profit and consolation; and at last, let me go off this stage, with the sweet peace of God, and the joyful hope of thy salvation. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXXIV.

Of preparing to meet our God.

O My soul! shall I dare to stand it out against the Lord; as if I were able to maintain my own, in defiance of him? Can my heart endure, or my hands be strong, in the day that he shall come to deal with me? O how silly, how mad were it, ever to think of any such encounter? As if, chaff or stubble, should offer to resist a consuming fire! it is quite another sort of preparation, that I must think of making, to find a happy congress; and the comfortable meeting with my God: from whom my sins do set me at a distance; and against whom they engage me, as an enemy. Where then I cannot pretend to grapple with the armed adversary, who is extremely too hard for me; my preparation is indeed, to make no such preparation; but only to throw down my weapons, and go in upon my submission; to seek peace; where I am unable for the war; and so turn my enemy into a friend; that shall exert his power, not against me, but for me. It is to humble myself low in the dust before him: and turn from those sins, that provoke him: and seek and beg for that mercy, which I need from him. While secure and resolute sinners are in no concern, to put by the wrath, gone out from the Lord against them; nor to prevent things from running to the utmost extremities; but fly out still more; and add to the affronts, and enflame the accounts, and so render all still worse and worse: delaying to make any reconciliation, and peace with

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God; till their time and hopes are all expired; and the judgments denounced, come to be inflicted; and so put their case beyond any further help: O may I look to the weightiest of all matters, in better time; before mercy have done with me; and all the doors of pity be barred against me. Let me (full of hope) betake myself to him, that is God, and not man: and will therefore, exceed, all the best, and kindest of men. Yea, let me go to him, that is my God; and therefore will use me, as his child: and where things have been ill carried by me, will yet have compassion upon me: and not remember my miscarriages against him; so much, as my relation to him; and where he puts me upon the returning to him; it is not then a presumptuous intrusion, and rushing upon him; but such acceptance of his invitation, and obedience to his command, as cannot but be well taken by him. For be sure, he does not call me, to deceive me, nor for any thing that he is to get by me; no, but only because he has a mind to deal well by me; and to shew himself kind to me. Therefore does even the majesty offended, so wonderfully condescend; and seek first, to have all taken up, and healed. Therefore he makes the overtures of peace; and bids me come home to my Father; that I may find, what he can, and will do, for a poor sinful undone creature. And though all my weak endeavours look very insignificant, to stop his righteous judgments, from myself or others; yet the smallest service, where he is pleased to put me upon it, he will not despise it. And what he has accepted even from the greatest sinners, when sensible and penitent; why should I despair, of his accepting from me a sinner, when I come labouring and heavy laden to my Saviour? His gracious nature, his love to souls, his delight in mercy, inclines him; yea, his own Word and promise does oblige him, to do the things
of

so kind; and to shew the favour so abundant and surprising.

Where then, he seems so forward, my soul, shall I hang back? Shall I slight his offers? Shall I mistrust his kindness? No, but I will believe, and admire his love: I will make the proof of it: and go and cast myself upon it. And my faith and interest in my Saviour, that will I reckon the best, of all my preparation, to meet my God; who is reconciled to us, on the account of what our Holy Redeemer has done for us: and nothing so recommending, to ingratiate us with our heavenly Father; as to be found in his Christ; clothed with the righteousness of his Son. But then may I draw near, in full assurance of faith; when I believe on the name of the Son of God; who is the propitiation for those sins, that make me ashamed, and afraid to shew myself in his presence. Therefore will I shelter under the umbrage, and trust in the merits, and depend upon the advocacy, of the Lord my righteousness: and I will go unto God through him. That where I am unworthy, his worthiness may be my plea: and where I have failed and sinned; yet I may be pardoned, and accepted in the beloved: yea, and have boldness and access with confidence, through the faith of him: though I should tremble and dread to be seen before the Holy One: were I to answer only for myself, and to wear no righteousness but my own.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY God! I have fallen far from thee;
 “ foully misbehaved myself toward thee;
 “ and so greatly sinned against thee, that my sins
 “ discourage me, even to appear before thee: yet
 “ will it be death, and certain ruin for me; to keep
 “ off, and not come unto thee: O help me, in the
 “ preparation

“ preparation of myself; yea, Lord, do thou prepare me, to meet my God, and humble me before thee; and turn me unto thee. Give me the true faith in thy Son; to render me acceptable in thy fight; and the spirit of prayer, so to call upon thy name; that thou mayest forgive me, and receive me; and come in mercy to me; and abide graciously with me; till thou take me up, to be ever with the Lord. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXXV.

Of the departing Soul.

THE time is coming: (and O how soon will it be upon me!) When thou, my soul, must quit thy present habitation: and not only for ever take leave of the house, and place, where now I dwell; to go and set up in another country; but be also unsheathed of thy fleshly scabbard, and make thy exit from this body: to take up thy everlasting abode, among a new set of company and entertainments; in a strange place, and another world. And art thou not, then, full of care, my soul, what shall become of thee there? How thou shalt be provided, and pleased; in that state of separation, from all that ever I have, or see upon earth? O how amazing, how puzzling, and terrifying is it; to think of such a change? When here now, I have all conveniencies about me; and every thing to gratify and content me: and those supports and comforts, which so long I have been used to, and am so well acquainted with, and find such continual need of; I am ready to fear it impossible for me, ever to live, and do well, without them. Are not the thoughts of parting, then, grievous and damping to thee, my soul? Yet, where it cannot be

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avoided, let us see how to order the matter, so that thou mayest not be cast down, and disquieted at it. Consider then, how many changes have I gone thro' already, to which I had little mind; yea, of which I was much afraid? And yet afterwards did I find them, to be agreeable, and changes for the better. Still, how averse am I to do many things; which, afterwards, I am glad that I have done? How often am I loath to go to bed? And yet when I find the refreshment of it; I am then as loath to leave it. Nor is this too mean, for thy consideration, my soul: because sleep is the very image, and elder brother of death; and in the dreaming condition, thou art in a sort of separation; and mayest observe some kind of prelude, to the final separation: when the body asleep, lies as dead: and yet art thou then full of life and operation; projecting and reasoning; travelling abroad, and entertaining thyself, with various scenes; and as it were, creating new worlds, all the while. Now this seems all to be done without the body. And O how much greater things than these, wilt thou be in a capacity of doing without it, elsewhere; when thou shalt quite be eased of thy clog; and got at full liberty, from this narrow confinement, in the body?

O my soul! thou hast heard, (and thou dost believe it;) that there is a better place; better company; better accommodations, and fruitions; (unspeakably better,) than any are here to be found. Thou hast been told, and thou art persuaded, of a condition, beyond the grave: that is (above all comparison,) to be preferred before the very best here on this side it. But yet, I know where it sticks and pinches, to spoil thy satisfaction in such expectation; that thou art as much assured, there is likewise a most wretched, as well as a most blessed state, in the other world. And when thou knowest too well, thy own desert of the former; that cramps and mortifies

mortifies thy hopes of the latter. When conscious, how ill thou hast done in this world; thou art ready then to despair of faring well in the next. Yet even under so sad apprehensions, (blessed be the riches of grace!) there is a cure for this fear. To remember, that there is a forgiving God; and a merciful Saviour of poor lost sinners: that, there is a heaven, even for such, as have deserved hell? and a Father of mercies, a Lord of love, to take up miserable objects; to revive drooping souls; to accept unworthy creatures; yea, for ever to save and glorify many, that have been foul provoking offenders.

Cheer up then, my soul; and encourage thyself, from what thy Lord has done; with comfortable expectations of yet greater things, that he will do, for thee. And upon this, do thou ground thy hopes still of more; to think, that ever he should be pleased to do so much, for such a sinner. Never despair then of that mercy, which could not be stopped, and hindered; by all my wicked enmity. For has he so long spared thee, now at last to forsake thee? When thou wast the most hateful, yet did he open an eye of pity upon thee? And after he has made thy case more hopeful, will he abhor thee? After so much work about thee; will he see all lost upon thee? After he has beheld thee at the worst, in thy blood; will he cast thee off? (though amended;) because thou art not quite cleansed? No, my soul, do thou rather hope, that by this change yet to come upon thee, he will perfect what concerns thee: and by delivering thee out of the sinful body, also take away thy defiled garments from thee: and so fit thee for him; that thou mayst, with joy and praise appear before him.

Remember, who it was, that took me out of the womb; and without any care of mine, secured all suitable provisions for me; in a state, that was before, more unknown to me, than now the future state

of the world ; to summon and bring in all sorts that ever lived on the face of the earth ; and Adam shall see his universal offspring, all in a day, rendezvoused and convened together : O who can conceive the mighty numbers and throngs which will make up that prodigious assembly, of all sexes and sizes, of all ages and conditions, one with another, that ever breathed in the world ; though such vast multitudes of them, never so long before, had been rotten and forgotten ! O how great then will be that day, which shall shew us so great an appearance ! and how much more great the day, wherein the greatest work that ever was, is to be done ! when the scale is to be turned, for life and death eternal ; to execute that judgment, upon which depends the fate of all the world ! to send all away, to the different places of their endless abode : and to fix upon every one, the definitive sentence, by which they must stand or fall for ever ! when every one's eternal business will be quite dispatched ; and the fortunes of all manner of souls and bodies, for everlasting ages, be determined ! O great, beyond all other days, that ever were, will be the day, when all this shall be done. And yet further great ; because it will be the last day ; the end of time, and the conclusion of all days : after which, time will be no more ; and there will be never another day. For the world itself must go down : and the day of judgment will be the end of this world ; which is but the stage of action ; to stand only, till all have done their parts ; and then be of no further use, but committed to the flames. And O how great is that day, which will put a period, not only to all days ; but to time itself, and the world ! black and fearful will it be beyond all expression, to such as here, have all their portion, and nothing of good to hope for, after the present life. Be they never so great here ; the distinctions that now elevate them, to such a height above the rest, will then be no more :

but

but they will be thrown on a level even with the lowest.

O great and terrible day of the Lord ; worthy of him, who is the great and dreadful God ! but, O wretched Atheists, and worldlings, and epicures ; that can make even as light as nothing, of this great day ! after all their jovial days, the doleful day is coming : and to put it away, as if it would never be upon them, does not make it a jot the further from them : but will make it so much the more grievous to be borne by them. And O how fearful will the surprize be to them ; after such a life as they have led ; and so bold with the eternal Judge of quick and dead, as they have made !

My soul ! what is the business of all my days ; but to provide well against this great day ! and to say, that I do make account of it ; and yet live, as if I never reckoned to see it ; what is it, but to act the infidel ; while I call myself a believer ? O let me make appear then, how I believe the great day ; by the great preparation that I do make for it. When the biggest of all concerns, I have then depending : O let that day run much in my mind, and the majestic solemnity and momentous transactions, be ever so before my eyes ; as to affect my heart, and suppress my sins, and sway my life ; and deter me from every thing now, that would then be frightful and killing to my soul.

THE PRAYER.

“ **E**TERNAL, blessed LORD GOD ! who hast
 “ appointed a day, wherein thou wilt judge
 “ the world ; O keep me, every day of my life,
 “ mindful of the great day of the Lord. That as
 “ I am still upon my way to it ; I may be still pre-
 “ paring for it ; and ordering myself, and all my
 “ conduct ; as one that do indeed expect it. That
 “ so,

“ so, the greatest day, may not bring upon me, the
 “ greatest curse; nor the end of time put an end to
 “ all my joy; but the coming of my Lord, prove
 “ a comfortable coming to my soul; to cashier all
 “ my sins; to ease me of all my griefs; to set me
 “ above all my fears, in perfect safety; and to make
 “ me completely holy, and easy, and for ever happy.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION XXXVII.

Of God's judging Men's Secrets.

O My soul! will there be a time, when all shall come out; and that which has been carried never so close, laid bare and open? So saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 5. “ The Lord will bring to light
 “ the hidden things of darkness; and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” Yea, so saith our Lord, Matth. x. 26. “ There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall
 “ not be known.” But God will glorify his omniscience; to the confusion of such vain men, as say,
 “ The Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of
 “ Jacob regard it.” Psal. xciv. 7. “ And, how does
 “ God know? can he judge thro’ the dark cloud?” Job. xxii. 13. They are ready to think themselves too hard, even for the understanding that is infinite. But O how sadly sensible will they be made, of their sottish mistake; and find, to their cost, that no thought can be withholden from him; who knows all that belongs to them, much better than they do understand it themselves. And because he will judge men’s secrets; hence may I conclude the judgment
 of

of God to be righteous, and according to truth : when he so thoroughly discerns, and so well attends, the inward springs of action ; and all those latent motives, and meanings ; which men so often err in judgment, for want of understanding. Because the good or evil of what is done, so much depends upon, the deep thoughts, and occult purposes ; which many times extremely alter the case ; to make things quite other indeed, than they do appear abroad. But the Lord begins at the heart ; and takes all, as there he finds it : without seeking to spell out designs, and purposes ; by testimonies, or presumptions. And because he so searches the heart, he will be sure to “ give every one according to their works,” Rev. ii. 23. Yea, thus will he make up all the defects of other judicatures : where secret sins use to escape ; and private offenders are not arraigned : though they may more deserve the punishment, than many that endure it. Yea, some here may sit in judgment upon others ; and condemn such, as are much their betters. And no account may be made of godly mens labours ; but they may suffer as malefactors. Now therefore does the world groan, for such a judge, as will come and ransack all the dark corners ; and bring prosperous villany, to open infamy ; and raise up afflicted piety, to triumph and glory. And such a one, I am assured, will come ; to judge the secrets, that cannot be detected or decided by earthly judges.

But, O my soul, how terrible will be the day of his coming, to all the rotten-hearted, that will then be unmasked, and have all their frauds detected ; by one that cannot be blinded, and that will not be mocked ; but will rip off the disguises, and unriddle the intrigues, of such as gloze over ill matters, and brazen off the foulest abominations ; and hug themselves, in the close conveyances ; that no eye sees them ; no body is aware of them ! He will make

bold to thrust into their secrets : and spoil all their plots : and set all in order before them ; yea, and in the face of the world ; which they reckoned, was utterly forgotten : and never again expected to hear of it more.

But O what a joyful hearing is this, my soul, to all sincere believers ; who strive to approve their hearts unto him, that searches them : that he will pronounce upon them, according to what, within doors, he finds them ! have they given themselves to secret prayers, and secret alms ; and to keep up truth in the inward parts ? have they done the good, to which none but he himself was witness ? No matter : never the worse shall they fare, but the better ; and find a reward the greater. Or have they been falsely accused and abused ? Then here is the comfort ; that truth will yet come out, and their witness, as well as judge, is in heaven, who will “ bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon day.”

When my services are so imperfect, that I cannot but find fault with even every thing I do : yet may this support me ; if he that calls for my heart, does not find me regarding iniquity there : but knows my willing mind ; and the desire of my soul to his name. And happy, then for me to be judged by my good principle, and my pious intention ; when never could I answer for all my life and every action. Nay, though I am conscious to many sins, that have wounded my spirit, and threaten ruin to my soul : and where they may not be publicly known ; nevertheless, still I dread them as lying on the file ; to be produced against me : yet if the Lord that knows of these sins, knows also of my repentance for them ; and my turning from them : that I am escaped the tempter's snare ; and got out of the wicked way : here then will be a secret, for my advantage ; to come out in the judgment ; even my secret repentance
such

tance and conversion; to be set over against every such secret sin and transgression. For no sins then shall rise against me, to spoil and condemn me; which here I did charge upon myself, to humble and reclaim me.

But, O my soul, with what holy caution, and continual circumspection, should I carry towards him; that will reckon with me, even for such secrets, as men cannot tell how to judge of? My carnal mind, my proud heart, my covetous humour, and love of the world, these are crimes in the sight of my judge; though I can come off well enough for them, in the esteem of my neighbours. And what though all the world absolve me, when the Lord of all condemns me? O let me not then, only take heed to my ways, but narrowly inspect my thoughts, and desires: the workings of my spirit, and the tendency of my heart, and not suffer the guile and filth there to lie and lodge, that would expose me to the wrath of my judge: but so examine, and correct, and cleanse all within, that I may ease my accounts, and promote my comforts, in that day, when "God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ."

THE PRAYER.

"AND keep me, O my Lord, ever mindful of
 " that great day; and the narrow search, that
 " will then be made into all the privacies of my
 " heart and life: that I may carry myself, and order all my concerns, with reference to it; and as
 " one that makes certain account of it: that I may
 " not think it enough, to keep up a fair appearance
 " before the world; nor do my works to be seen of
 " men; but may be chiefly concerned, to approve
 " my heart unto thee, who seest in secret, and all my
 " conduct still pleasing in thy sight through Jesus
 " Christ. Amen.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

Of Christ's Enemies to be made his Foot-stool.

TO find out the enemies of Christ, my soul, must we not rifle hell, or the heathen countries of the earth; or the modern synagogues of the Jews? For who of the Christian denomination, might be suspected for any of that number? Can men that name his name, and call him Lord, and profess to believe in him, and serve him, yet prove false to him, and be found against him? O that he had no enemies of his own house! that none who live in his church were the vipers, to gnaw the bowels of their mother! yea, that none who eat of his bread, were the enemies of his cross, and haters of his ways and truths, and persecutors of his servants and followers! for it is not the outward cringing to him, that makes them hearty friends with him. No; were there not such as bowed and mocked him? Matth. xxvii. 29. And do not we know who kissed him, and betrayed him? And still how many, that carry the mien of friends; and the hearts of foes? When for all the fair professions abroad; they have cankers at the root, and nothing in the Holy One of God can please them; But his Holiness is the greateye-fore to them; and none more disaffected to his gospel and government: none more for the things which he forbids and hates. The Antichrist himself, (that sly opposite) can call himself the servant of Christ's servants; but as he knew Judas, under his apostolick vestment; so does he still know who betrays him.

Now all such enemies to him, O what a dreadful
enemy

enemy will they find of him? Though for a while, he suffer them to ravage, and domineer, and exert their spite and vengeance: and the Leviathan, after he is struck with the hook, rolls and flounces on the line: Our Lord not presently executing vengeance on every one, whose day he sees coming; but enduring the vessels of wrath; while they abuse the favour shewed them; will not be warned, to flee from the wrath to come: and do but mock at the denunciation of judgment upon them: yet it is never the further from them: for he that "lifts up his hand to heaven, and saith, I live for ever;" has also said "I will render vengeance to my enemies, and will reward them that hate me." Deut. xxxii. 40, 41. "And can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord?" Ezek. xxii. 14. Even bulls of Bashan, are no more to him, than smallest worms of the earth: and those mighty Nimrods, that insult in the world, as if none could controul them; shall tremble and melt and sink at the sight of that judge, whose very look shall strike despair through them; and for ever suppress them. They that set themselves against the Lord, and his Christ; and eat up his people as bread, glutting their rage, with the blood of his saints; after they have shewed what trusty servants they were, to the devil's interests; and fought for their master, as long as ever they were able: then shall they lie down in darkness, and shame, and sorrow; and "gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven, and not repent of their deeds," Rev. xvi. 10, 11. But dash themselves like waves against the mighty rock, and shoot up the arrows, that return upon their own heads. "If the Lord but blow up on them; his breath is like a stream of brimstone, to devour them," Isa. xxx. 33. Yea, how soon can he that spake them into being, even look them
into

into ruin! how strong soever be their props, and how many soever their abettors now, there will be none at all, to deliver them then.

But at the coming of the Lord, even they that here carried it, as lords of the world, shall be pulled down to worship, at the very feet of his saints. And how will this cut the hearts of those haughty sons of pride; who thought such his retainers fit only to be their vassals? But what a just retaliation then will it be, upon the topping lordly sinners, that trode underfoot the Son of God; and whose turn nothing would serve, but to vilify and run down godliness, and all its followers: when the hand of the Lord shall find them out, and throw them low enough, to lie under his feet? Which is not only a signification of infamy and disgrace; for them thus to be trode down; who did lift themselves up so high; but also the emblem of their pain and torment; that as a footstool bears the weight of the body, so they must bear the Lord's everlasting wrath, upon their souls. And upon whomsoever this "Stone shall fall, it will grind them to powder," Mat. xxi. 44. And make them wish rather for "rocks and mountains, to fall upon them; and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb," Rev. vi. 18. However easy and pleasant sin may seem in the committing, so that they can make merry, and be transported with it, and even place their heaven in it; yet, when the heat of lust is over, and its fuel spent, and all the baits of sin are gone, and nothing but the sting and horror remains: then will it be felt like itself, so smart and keen, that there will be no enduring, no expressing it.

O my soul! never grudge then at the wicked's prosperity, who, for that spurt of jollity, must pay so dear, to a whole eternity. Let them cock and reign, and talk pert, and carry it high, for a time; a short time! alas, what will this avail them,
when

when they must away hence to their own place, to lie disabled, and confounded, and tormented for ever! when they shall be trampled, and crushed, in that great "wine-press of the wrath of God," Rev. xiv. 20. till the "blood comes up to the horse-bridles." O never admire them, for the figure that they now make, nor think ever the better of any wickedness which they so fain would bring into credit. For be they never so high and great, there is a higher than they, whom they will find too big for them all, that will strike even through kings, in the day of his wrath, and raise up his servants that were their scorn and spite to make the glorious appearance, both as his darlings and their judges. O turn thy eyes then, my soul, from the conduct of things in this world, to the sure and speedy coming of thy Lord, who will scatter thy foes, and set thee above all thy fears. For he must and will reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. And their fall and shame, and ruin, will be the rise and triumph, and salvation, of all that love him, and look, and long, and prepare for him.

THE PRAYER.

"O My LORD, who art able to subdue all
 " things to thyself; conquer all the enmity
 " of my heart and mind, which resists thy Word
 " and Spirit, and make me so submissive to thy
 " will, and so loyal to thy government, that when
 " thy enemies shall be made thy footstool, I may be
 " spared in thy mercy, and received up to thy
 " glory; and thou that hast the hearts of all in thy
 " hands, O subdue the hearts of thy foes; and not
 " only rule among them, but get such sweet con-
 " quests over them, that they may rejoice so to be
 " won; and escape that curse, to be trode under
 " thy

“thy feet, and inherit the blessing, to be admitted
“into thy kingdom. Amen.”

MEDITATION XXXIX.

Of boldness in the day of judgment.

TO find the privilege of a sweet refreshment in the great and terrible day of the Lord; and be able then to bear up, when the mighty multitudes will be trembling, and sinking; yea, to take courage, and stand undaunted, before the eternal Judge, when the most will be at their wits end, and utterly consumed with terrors; and instead of dreading any evil, to wait and hope then, for the greatest good! this is the highest pitch of faith and love; and how desirable, O my soul, is the attainment? How comfortable, if it be possible? But canst thou think of thy final trial, and not be afraid? Canst thou venture upon the holy Lord, and count thyself sufficient to undergo the test of his piercing judgment? O who can abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? Would not this highly aggravate my crimes: to brist up, as if I were innocent, when I know how much I have offended? There is, indeed, an audaciousness that is insufferable, to God and man: when the vilest wretches can so forget themselves, to carry it off with shameless foreheads, as if they had done no harm, nor were in any danger; as if they could out-face the justice of heaven, and be too hard even for the Judge of all the earth. But yet there is a confidence, well becoming the children of God, with
which

which they may bear up, even in the day of judgment. And this is not the boldness, arising from any worth or purity, on which they presume in themselves, but from the relation wherein grace has placed them to God, and to his Christ; whereupon it is, that they take such courage. And what may they not expect from the hands of such a Father, and such a Saviour? The God that would look upon them, in all their pollution, when there was nothing to invite his kindness to them; he that would so regard them, even at the lowest and worst, to take them to his favour, and adopt them for his children, will he lose all upon them, that ever he has done for them? Will he severely exact their failings, and proceed in the strictness of justice against them! Right, indeed, he will do, and according to truth, his judgment will be; yet with all the mitigation, that ever their case will admit. When their Judge is also their Father, his bowels will yearn over them; and the tenderest regard will he have for them: Though no mercy will he shew to the wrong of his justice; yet where they have not a righteousness of their own sufficient to save them, he will impute the perfect righteousness of another to them, and accept his Son's holy merits, for all their ill deserts, and see all that made up in him, which he finds wanting in them. The love that unites them to him, secures them, that they shall not be cast away from him. Therefore dare they trust themselves into the hands of such a Father; and though he judge them, fear not that he will condemn them.

And, O what comfortable expectation may the members of Christ Jesus have from their glorious head; the best, the greatest, and dearest friend, of theirs, in the world? To see the sole administration and management, of all the dooms-day proceedings, committed to the man, whom God has appointed; and who had never become a man; but to redeem

his beloved : nor gone through his sufferings, but for their sakes : shall they suspect then, that he will easily part with them, after he has shed his precious blood for them ? Or shall they fear him, to pass the sentence of death upon them ; who came down from heaven ; yea, who laid down his life for them ? Whose sacrifice and satisfaction, is their discharge from death and damnation : and his holiness and merits, their plea and title, to the blessed life, and glorious inheritance eternal : who became even as one of them ; and made it, not only his office, but his pleasure, to save them. And in the judgment then, he comes not sure to undo, all that he has done for them : no, but to complete all upon them : to receive them to him ; and admit them to live for ever with him. How then can they be dejected ? And why should they not be joyful, at the appearance of such a Judge ? When they would not have another : and never could they wish a better.

The biggest potentate in the world, the stoutest man that ever breathed on the earth, who has no saving interest in Christ, will then find his spirit flag, and all his courage fail, in the judgment. He that carried it here never so high, will not be able then to hold up his head. And yet even the lowest of his members, the poorest of his followers, who are for the holiness, which he loves, and so spited in the world, as he was : he will take their part, as they have espoused his cause. He will take care of them, and shew all favour to them, and lift up the light of his countenance upon them, and make all to succeed well with them. His sheep, that hear his voice, he knows them, and will own them ; and say, " Come ye blessed," to them. His retainers, that trust only in him, and hang all upon him, he will advance them, above all that despised them ; and make all their enemies know, how much he has loved them. He will give them boldness and comfort,

fort, and do them not only right, but honour; to make the dreadful day, the most joyful of all their days; and the time of others confusion, the opportunity of their most glorious exaltation.

O my soul! how little is it to be regarded, who are here the rising men, and the great ones of the world? Or who have now the high looks, and the bold faces? When after some have gone away lowly, and desponding, and others have carried it off insolent and presuming, yet all shall be brought to another reckoning. And many such as were timorous and self-abased, shall then take heart, and appear in triumph. And many that vaunted and ruffled, and insulted over others, shall droop and quake, and shriek, and not be able to shew their faces: O may I go through my humiliation here, and find my rising time hereafter! And as my Lord was, so may I be, in this world, a follower of holiness, though ill used for it: that when he shall appear the second time, with power and great glory, I may lift up my head, and rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD my GOD! whatever be my lot in
 “ this life, adopt me, I beseech thee, into the
 “ number of thy dear children: and make me such
 “ a follower of thee, that I may now have confidence towards thee, and hereafter stand with courage and comfort before thee, and find mercy
 “ and countenance from thee. O may I be so related to the blessed Saviour of the world, as an
 “ humble dependent upon him, so conformable to
 “ him, and interested in him; as a faithful follower,
 “ and living member of him; that I may look with
 “ hope and joy to such a Judge, who died for my
 “ sins, and has called me by his grace, to obtain
 “ **AN**

“ an inheritance among them that are sanctified,
 “ through faith in his name. O my Lord Re-
 “ deemer! keep me so waiting and preparing for
 “ thy coming, that I may be found in safety, and
 “ confidence, and the greatest gladness before thee,
 “ at thy appearing. Amen.”

MEDITATION XL.

Of Conversation in Heaven.

OFTEN do I make mention of conversation in heaven: but, O my soul, how seldom do I experience any thing like it? So much this world has me; and swallows me up in it, that I am in a manner, buried and lost, both to the work, and to the joys of a far better place. Though I should be laying higher designs, and soaring a loftier pitch, and driving at a nobler end, as a burgher, and free denizen of that continuing city, which I seek to come to; yet how, (alas) am I caught and entangled, and pinned down here; even till my heavenly part cleaves to the dust of the earth!

O bethink thyself, my soul, from whence thou camest, and whither thou art tending. Remember thy native place, and thy better home. Where should thy contemplation be taken up, but upon the eternal glorious things above? There shouldst thou be a daily guest; yea, like such a fixed inhabitant, till whether in the body or out, thou canst hardly tell. For here thou art as an exile, far from thy dear country: thither then should be thy vehement bent, as to thy own proper element, in which thou wouldst choose,

choose, and love to live; and out of which it scarce deserves the name of living, to have thy abiding. There hast thou the grand negotiation to carry on; and all thy affairs below, O what are they, but even as nothing, to those thou hast in hand above? There art thou to attend, at the throne of thy God; to keep the interest of his church and religion, next thy heart; and to be laying up treasure for thyself; even the provision for a whole eternity. And to what serves the grace, which thou hast received thence, but (by a spiritual magnetism) to incline and carry thee thither? yea, what member art thou of Christ, the Lord from heaven; if thou dost not love and long to be with thy glorious God? What is his Spirit, but as the fiery chariot, to mount thee up, that there, thou mayst live, and dwell with him? And O where canst thou ever be so well? What wouldst thou have, that heaven does not afford? What can thy widest capacities ever crave, that is not there to be found?

There indeed, are no companions or entertainments, for the fordid worldlings, and loose epicures, who would sell Christ for pence; or fancy a lot better than a saint; and take much more content in swearers and drunkards, at the places of excess, than among saints and angels at the throne of grace.

But to one that is born from on high, and has the seed of God, for a divine principle, planted in his heart; O what more agreeable and entertaining, than the presence and fruition of his God, and all the beloved, and blessed of the Lord? in this is seen the power of godliness; to rescue and raise souls, out of the poor low brutish life; and engage and quicken them to aspire, and pant after the better things above. And here is the trial of a child of God: to answer his heavenly calling, in delighting to draw nigh, and correspond with his heavenly Father.

But

But O how do I forget, and desert my Christianity; when I grow listless to seek a better country! to what purpose do I make any profession of Christ's holy religion, when I relish none but the vain and worldly conversation? For what more contrary, than the Spirit of God, and the spirit of the world; Where there are no heavenly dispositions, what meetness for the heavenly habitations? How unlike is my soul to be in heaven; till heaven first be in my heart?

O then let me use myself to those great things, for which I am made; and keep my mind and heart upon the glorious objects of my faith and hope. Let me leave this world behind, and get upon the wing, my soul, to live and breath, in a purer air on high; (as far as I can reach) within the verge of heaven; prying and pressing into it, till I have attained the blessed possession of it. Thus shall I surmount the troubles as well as the snares of this world; and promote my tranquillity, together with my duty. For whence arises so much my uneasiness, and discomfort; as from the turning myself loose, to lead a low scrambling life, after the course of this world? And setting my heart upon the things, that can do nothing for me, but only cheat and vex me? The higher I do ascend, above the fondness of its vanities, the further shall I escape out of the reach of its crosses. So as either not being invaded by them; or else fortified against them: crucified to this world, when my passage lies clear to the next: despising all upon earth, for the joy of my part in heaven; and shewing no passion, but for the things belonging to my salvation. O what such heavenly ease, as results from such a heavenly frame! may this then be my rest; here let me dwell; and thus be taken up; in the high contemplation; in this great conversation and sweet intercourse above, with my God, my Saviour, my Comforter, and all his wonderful court of heaven,

ven, where he lives and reigns in unconceivable glory to all eternity.

THE PRAYER.

“ **B**lessed GOD! thou art not ashamed to be
 “ called their God, who seek a better hea-
 “ venly country. This is thy children’s property,
 “ to live above the present world, in pursuit of ano-
 “ ther; to incline towards thee; to leave all for
 “ thee, and love nothing in the world so much, as to
 “ keep up a dear communion with thee. But O how
 “ little of this mark has appeared upon me? and
 “ how much have I shewed of a contrary spirit and
 “ temper? in minding and pursuing this world;
 “ so as little to regard any thing beyond it: and
 “ taken up with the inferior perishing contentments
 “ here, till I have forgot and neglected, the greater
 “ goods to come, that will endure for ever. O
 “ how much a stranger have I been to my God,
 “ and the most blessed fruitions above! and this is
 “ my shame and sin, as well as my damage and
 “ loss; so to turn my back upon the Lord, that
 “ was pleased to make me for the enjoyment of
 “ himself. O gracious God! forgive me the wic-
 “ ked folly, and apostacy of this worldly mind, and
 “ ungodly life. And turn me from the world, to
 “ thyself. Yea, raise my grovelling soul, to mount
 “ above, to seek thy kingdom; to attend thy throne,
 “ and so to be taken up with thee, and to delight
 “ in thee; that I may readily forsake and despise
 “ all, which would tempt me from my God; who
 “ is the greatest and the best in the world, and so
 “ will be world without end. Amen.”

THE FIFTH DECAD.

MEDITATION XLI.

Of the World's Temptations.

IF the whole "world lies in wickedness," yea, (ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, John v. 19.) in the wicked one; surrounded by *the prince of the power of the air*; even like the air itself encompasseth this globe of earth: if he be spreading his nets and toils, all over the earth, to fetch more souls still into his condemnation: O my soul! what hopes then, to escape falling by the hands of such a formidable foe, of no less deep reach than fiery rage; that is evermore plotting, and attempting to ruin even all mankind: if we be not screened and defended by a power stronger than either ours or his? The world is that great and taking bait, by which he inveigles so many into his snare. Both the companies and the entertainments of this world have such a force, that they seldom fail of success to run men out of the way of their duty, and to throw them upon their sin and danger. Wicked men carry the strong inclination, to spread their infection, and make all even as bad as themselves; to beat back, that which is to save souls; as if some plague were coming to destroy their bodies. And as eager they are, to help on their damnation; as any can be, to make them sure of heaven. Such as will not run with them to their excesses, nor bear any share in their fraternities, they will not only wonder at them, and revile them, but stick hard upon them; and be as
briars

briars and thorns to afflict and hinder them. The noise and tumult that they use to make with their meetings and revels; and the confidence and flourish with which they carry off their impiety and debauchery; how does this shock the wavering, and harden the ill-designing; and interrupt and pester even the most serious practitioners of holy living? What is never so wicked, getting but into vogue and fashion; puts on the boldness then, even to challenge consent and imitation, and it shall go for a ridiculous scrupulosity, or a piece of ill nature, to make any opposition; yea, but to call it in question. Thus does company usurp a kind of authority; obliging others to venture after, where they have not been afraid to go before; and exposing him to scorn, that must needs take a way by himself, and will not do like the rest. O my soul! how few companies do I find, that are not entanglements, to catch and plunder me, of a better thing, than they can give me? For when I strain conscience, or abate any thing of my integrity, for their pleasure; then do I come from them, not only by the loss, but with wounds and smart; and the complaisance, which drew me on, for some quiet and ease, sends me off, to my pain and grief.

But the temptations that are baited with pleasure, these carry the greatest danger. When the wickedness is strewed and covered over, with that which is agreeable and charming to flesh and blood, O how seldom is it repelled and withstood! that which offers itself with a winning address to the senses; how much has it the advantage, of all which is preached, with never such reason, to the understanding! if the way be smooth and beaten, soft and delightful, who is not for it? Let it cost never so dear afterwards, if it but please for the present, that determines the biggest part of the world, who are for taking their delight, while they may have

it, and love still to be pleased, though it be into their own undoing.

And thus, my soul, is this world, such a common barricade, to block up our way, to the kingdom of our God; that I have the greatest need of all caution and circumspection, how I do use it, and steer my passage through it, that I be not ensnared and betrayed by it, nor lost and ruined in it. Where I am in the enemy's country, it concerns me to be ware of all my motions and actions. Though I hear not arms still clashing, yet must I not forget the warfare depending. But even where the way is strewn before me, be jealous of the enemies stratagems against me, and never grow secure and out of fear, where the fight is managed more by secret craft than by open force; and where I am never more endangered, than when I am most honoured. To be crucified to the world, that is one of the best expedients to be safe from it; and the less I care for it, the less I am like to be hurt by it. To get above the reach of its darts, I must live above the love of its sweets: and so far from being fond of it, as to long for a parting with it, and to enter upon that better world, where are joys without snares; yea, fulness of joy, without fear of going too deep, or taking too much; a paradise without any serpent, and no danger with all that pleasure, which shall last for ever.

THE PRAYER.

“ **I**N this tempting world, so full of snares, that
 “ every step I tread, I go in peril of my soul;
 “ O Lord God Almighty and most merciful, pre-
 “ serve and keep me, I beseech thee, from its evil
 “ and danger. And make me wise and watchful,
 “ to discover the traps laid for me, and the ruin
 “ that threatens me; and also hardy and resolute,
 “ to

“ to maintain my own integrity against every seducing company ; to withstand the tempter’s offers, and to deny myself, all the sinful pleasures, which would inveigle me out of my safety, as well as duty. Grant me, Lord, thy grace and Holy Spirit, to be my guide and security ; that I may not fall a prey to my enemy, but find a sure and happy convoy, to thy heavenly everlasting glory. Amen.”

MEDITATION XLII.

Of the World’s wickedness.

THE wickedness of the world, is the common subject in almost every mouth. Who has not a stone to fling this way ? Even they that contribute most to make it a wicked world, can yet complain of it ; and hang their own naughtiness upon it : thus seeking to clear or shelter themselves, by crying out, how bad it is with others. Indeed, there needs no more to prove this evil upon the world, but only to go with open eyes into it. And he that does not see the wickedness, is blinded with his own. Yea, he that is not convinced of his own, makes it still the greater, by regarding it so little. The Psalmist could say, “ The earth is dissolved : ‘ I bear up the pillars of it.’ ” But may not I, my soul, complain, the world is out of frame, and I help to pull the pillars from under it ? And in censuring the world, what do I but tax myself, when it is in my power to make it better, by amending that part of it, which I myself make up ? But to become good,

good, I must first know how much I am too bad; and not spare that evil at home, which is like to do me more hurt, than any that I see abroad.

Yet in bewailing my own offences, how does it still add to the sorrow, that I am surrounded on every side, with such multitudes of partners, till it looks like a common conspiracy, and universal insurrection, against him that owes and keeps us all! Some would dispute him, and some would even swagger him, out of his own creation, and not count it enough to live in the world without him: but they must be up, to give defiance to him, and insult upon him. Some (it is true) are more demure in their wickedness, and mock him with a form; when, alas! the serious religion is none of their care, but rather their scorn. Eating and drinking and flesh-pleasing, is all the business of some men's living. Their reason serves them, but more cunningly to play the beast; and that they make their only heaven, which is but helping to fit them up for hell. Almost every one is his own center, and idol, and would have all to himself, when the world, alas! has not enough, but to quiet one single soul. And when all are for getting still more meat for their lusts, and more elbow-room in the world; hence come the wars and fightings, even among such, as can agree to sin together; though not to give way to one another. But the most deadly spite and inveterate malignity, is against all grace and piety: and such heart-rising, and heart-burning against the power of godliness, and the whole generation of God's children, who will offer to espouse the cause of holiness, that no such persons shall be spared by them: no such matter endured among them: no such enemies with them, as those that would reform them: none so madly struck at by them as those that deserve best of them. Thus do they bar up themselves in the strong holds
of

of their sins; till the use of any means, signifies little or nothing to them; but even all is lost upon them.

O my soul! what a rueful prospect is this of the world; as the sink of sin, and all corruption of manners! when that, which takes its very name from neatness, (*κοσμησις*) has never a clear part, not overspread with filthiness; but is like a common shore of noisome abomination; and the great forge of mischief, and seat of rebellion against heaven. Yet let me see what good I can fetch out of all the evil. For does it not alarm me, to rouse and save myself from it, that I perish not in the wickedness of it, and the heavy doom that is coming upon it? Let who will think to make a perfect conquest of me, by that clubbing argument, All the world does so; have not I the more reason then to beware, and suspect the greater danger; and doubt it may not be safe, because so common? Must I throw myself away for company; because it is to go along with so many? O what will this avail, to bring me off at last before my judge, that I was no worse than the rest; when he charged me, not to follow the multitude, in their evil; nor conform to this world; but keep myself unspotted from it? Here then may I see it, not only lawful, but needful, for me to make a schism; and in this case, to be a separatist, is not to give any just offence; but to be wiser than the rest. When it is not, what the world does; but what the Lord says, that must be the rule of my practice here, and of my judgment hereafter. I lament to see the world so bad, and so nigh to be lost, to see such heaps of sinners, lie weltering in their blood and gore, and nothing willing of a cure, not so much as sensible of their case. My heart bleeds for them; O that I could contribute any thing to awaken and recover them! for as long as I live among them, I cannot but be pained, to observe how it is with them. And

I can-

I cannot but wonder, that any who are sober and seem to be pious, should ever be disturbed and offended, or quarrel and grumble at the endeavours of their neighbours, to promote the reformation of manners; when as forward as any, they are to cry out of the world's wickedness; and cannot but confess the wo-need of its reformation; and if in earnest they would fain have the thing done; if they would be glad to see it, and rejoice in it; why then do they not countenance and assist the design of such, as have their hands in, to contribute all they are able towards it? Or if they be not pleased with the way and method taken by others; why do not they fall to work themselves? For what does it, but give suspicion, of ends none of the best, to lie carping and censuring all that is attempted by any else; till they let us see somewhat better of their own? Alas, my soul! what good is here like to be done; when all such as most need it, hate to be reformed; and even they that declare for it, are snagging among themselves about the manner of doing it? And so the devil still keeps his ground; and his black list are so far from being reclaimed by them, that they laugh, and make but a scorn of them, and insult and triumph over them. Yet after all defeats, willing am I still to entertain some hopes of reformation: but those hopes, alas! how low do they run? And is not this enough to cool my fondness of such a world; whose wickedness looks so incorrigible that it is well, if not the elder, still the worse: till nothing but the last dreadful fire, will serve for its purification. But to him, who alone is able to mend it, let me look up; and from that Almighty Hand, to which nothing is impossible; beg such help, as is worthy of God, to come and relieve, in so sorrowful and desperate a case.

THE PRAYER.

“ **I**T is of the Lord’s mercies, that we are not all consumed : when we are all so corrupt and depraved. Wonderful is thy patience, O gracious God, to bear, as thou dost, with such a wicked world ; by which thou art so much provoked, every day, even every where : and to spare and preserve and bless, and comfort, such a sinner as myself ; who brought a sinful nature into this sinful world ; and ever since have been putting in my share, to add to the wickedness of it. Forgive me, I beseech thee, and renew me : and save me from my sinful self ; and from the present evil world. O help me to live above it, and to walk contrary to the common course of it ; in simplicity and godly sincerity having my conversation in it. Send out, Lord, thy light and thy grace ; to dispel the darkness, and to reform the wickedness of it, still more and more. That sinners may be convinced of their evil ; and forbear to tempt their danger, in doing so wickedly : and may turn to the Lord, and walk in thy ways, and so obtain pardon and peace with God through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XLIII.
Of the World’s Misery.

SAINTE Paul hangs all the world in mourning : Rom. viii. 22. “ The whole creation groans and travails in pain together till now.” All that was made for man’s use, is made the worse, by his abuse. And no wonder then if a wicked world, is also

also become a wretched world. Man gave sin entrance into the world; and misery came in at the same door: for this dogs sin still at the heels. All the plagues upon soul and body, both here and eternally, what are they but the cursed train, that derive from our apostacy and iniquity? What else fills the world with the habitations of cruelty, and makes even every day productive of some new? What else brings pain and sickness, crosses and tribulation, war and desolation, death and damnation? so that men may read their sin even in their smart, and find how much they have offended; when so grievously plagued. This makes the joys of the world so hollow; and its troubles so real: because men are such triflers with God; and in such good earnest with their sins. It is sin, that sets all to pieces; and makes the sad work to be seen every where: renders this world like hell; and hell so like itself, the place of torment: because sin first kindled, and still feeds, the fire.

Whence grows all this world's misery, but from the abounding of iniquity in it: and the withdrawing of God's presence from it? Therefore is it so full of sorrowful complainers; because so full of ungodly sinners. Some complain of nothing but the suffering: but, O my soul, do thou mourn for the sinning; which is the cursed root, that bears all the bitter fruit. And canst thou behold the transgressors, and not be grieved? O how can any righteous soul choose, but be vexed from day to day, with the filthy conversation of the wicked: to see and hear of their pranks and abominations; the dishonours done to God, and the wrong and ruin to souls! though it never pains the ungodly; to live still in the view and din of all the villany: yet to such as have their hearts tender, and right with God, it is even death, and as the very mouth of hell. To range in the solitudes of a wilderness, how much more eligible; than to dwell in such tents of ungodliness? The
beasts

beasts of the forest would be better company; than such beasts of the people: nor is it such a nuisance to bear the savage nature of those; as the diabolical manners of these. Yea, to cohabit with toads and serpents, could not be more lothsome to a delicate person, than the association with such vile impious miscreants, to a godly soul. Who that loves God, can count it good to be here; where his ears are even continually called and loaded, with the blasphemies and provocations of his beloved! how woful is it to sojourn in such a Mesech, to dwell in such tents of Keder! O my soul! shall this not take my heart off it; and crucify me to it? Can I forbear to cry out with the psalmist, "O that I had wings like a dove, "that I might flee away, and be at rest?" for what rest in such a disorderly place of uproar and confusion? What tranquillity, in such a vale of misery; where the shifting of scenes, is only the changing of pains: and deep calling to deep, one trouble rolling in the neck of another, is even all, that they who do well consider, can reckon upon? And yet the misery, which deserves most to be lamented, is that which uses to be least of all regarded; even the prevalence of crying sin, and all impiety; which now makes the world so unhappy, and is hurrying such multitudes down to everlasting misery. O who would not groan to be enlarged, from such a goal; and long to be rid of such company! where the blackest part of all (that makes it not only a hard prison, but a horrid dungeon,) is that the eternal fountain of light and joy is so far departed from it; and God that hateth all the workers of iniquity, has in such a great measure, forsaken it. So few glimpses of his presence, are here to be seen, and any communications of himself so rare to be found. But the unclean are even left to be filthy still: and the incorrigible, given up to a reprobate sense, and vile affections: taken captive by the devil; and yet so they

would have it : bound in the chain of their sins, for the judgment of the great day ; and they care not for it, desire not to be released : but there to abide, are well pleased. This, O this is the most desperate misery, to be so insensible of the misery ; and not abide any help, till it be grown past all recovery.

T H E P R A Y E R.

“ **P**ITY, O Lord, this poor wretched world ; that
 “ has nothing but its misery, to incline thy
 “ mercy. Remember it in the low and sad estate,
 “ where it lies, and groans for thy almighty help,
 “ O do that great work, worthy of the great God,
 “ to send relief, and command deliverance. Kill
 “ the sin and enmity, whence grows all the trouble
 “ and misery. Give sinners open eyes, and sensible
 “ hearts ; to see and bewail their case : and
 “ make them willing to be healed ; and flock in-
 “ to Christ, that they may be saved. O discover thy-
 “ self, even to such as are in darkness and the sha-
 “ dow of death. Let God arise, that his enemies
 “ may be scattered ; and all that hate him flee be-
 “ fore him : and that sin, the root of all the enmi-
 “ ty as well as cause of all the misery, may wither
 “ away and perish at thy presence. Return, O
 “ God of Hosts, look down from heaven : cause
 “ thy face to shine, and we shall be saved ; and thy
 “ name be for ever glorified. Amen.

M E D I T A T I O N XLIV.

Of the Mischiefs of Company.

O My soul ! what greater comfort of life, than the enjoyment of friends ? And what does the world

world afford so helpful, as mutual society, well used and improved? But, yet alas, how little of the best friendship is to be found, even among the most friends! and how much more hurt than good, comes by the common company, that we meet with in the world! O that I had not my own frequent harms, for so many proofs of that danger; whereof so few seem to be aware! so does Cain's humour still prevail upon this earth, that scarce a man to be found, who thinks himself obliged to be his brother's keeper: nor can many be content, only to shift away from them the care of other souls, but they must offer their service, rather to damn, than to save them. So nauseous and intolerable may we find a great deal of company; that there is a necessity to break off from them: that we may not be partakers with them, and either have our hearts broken, or our souls ruined, by them. Some relief it is, indeed, that the world is so wide; to give us room to avoid them: when even deserts are more inviting than such meetings; and wild beasts more innocent companions, than the profane dissolute men, of such savage behaviour; as to out-do, even the most noxious brute-creature.

Nay, even that which is called good company, (as the matter is commonly carried,) what good does it; but rather prove a snare, to draw us off better edification; than any we are like to get by their conversation? My soul cannot but look upon that man with pity, who is taken up in company, even continually; and knows no more how to live out of it, than fish out of the water. When his companions are the only bladders, to buoy him up into any cheerfulness, and as soon as they are gone, he droops and sinks into his dumps. Wretched creature! That is to himself so great a stranger: and cannot abide his own company; nor tell what to do with himself, any longer than his fellows have him in their keep-
ing

ing. Thus he shakes off himself; and lives all to others. Yea, his associates take place of his God; and he that is so much for company-keeping, is nobody, at any devout praying. So much is he taken up with men, he knows not where to find himself, for that greatest of all business, which he has do with the Lord. O my soul! canst thou call this living; which is all diversion, and nothing but rambling abroad? When my great concern is, to be well acquainted at home, and dwell with myself. For I must expect to die by myself, and to answer for myself; and to go away solitary, into my future eternity.

But though company itself, through the hurry, so often proves a hindrance; yet when wicked, it is yet far more mischievous; for shedding a contagious influence. And by their examples and carriage, by their sayings and doings, O how do bad men prevail, to corrupt the principles, and debauch the practices, of such unhappy creatures, as fall into their hands! how do they push on the ill-inclined, even upon the foulest villanies; and so enflame their spirits; that they shall make it but a piece of merriment, to throw away their souls? And how do they also take off the better disposed; and scoff them out of their religion; and make them ashamed, to own any such thing, as the care of their salvation? O my soul! how deplorable is the case of those that are platted in such accursed leagues! but how much yet sadder theirs, who choose and love so to have it: and nothing will serve their turn, but to run and thrust themselves into the fire? When it is all their joy, to dwell in a pest-house, and throw their souls into the devil's arms: O what hope then of their recovery; that have such about them, to inspect them! and if they but offer to look heaven-ward, they are in dread so to hear of it; as they know not how to bear it, to be taunted, and even wearied out
of

of their lives, should they but set themselves to get out of their sins. And any that would do them good, and help to save them, they are tutored, to shun such, and taught to scorn them.

O my soul! when the spawn of the serpent, has so overspread this earth, and ungodly company carries all by the majority: how can I escape them, but sometimes I shall be plagued with them? Yet sure I have no need to hanker after their baits; nor to frequent their haunts. I cannot think myself obliged to run upon hell; in a compliment to the wild rout. No, but I will dread their infection, and be shy of their conversation. And when I must fall in their way; I will bear it, as my cross: not embrace it, as my choice; nor take it for the center of my rest; but the field of my warfare: where I must go with my antidotes, and my armour; in fear of the danger: and lay out all my care and might, to prevent the temptation; for carrying me down the stream, to my destruction.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Good Lord, my gracious God! be thou my
 “ continual teacher and preserver: to guide
 “ and direct me, how to steer my course, and carry
 “ myself, among all the company, with whom I am
 “ concerned here in the world. Make me wise, to
 “ see the snares; and cautious to avoid them. Yea,
 “ keep me, Lord, by thy grace, from the mischiefs
 “ and dangers, against which I am not able to de-
 “ fend myself. Secure me from the hands of the
 “ wicked; that would hinder me from keeping the
 “ commandments of my God. Make me a lover of
 “ solitude; and expert and careful to manage it, for
 “ thy service, and my soul’s advantage. And so
 “ enable me to converse with all men; that I may
 be

fellowship with it. And as I dread the end of such men, O may I be as much afraid to lie in their state, to take their course, to do their work, and to espouse their leagues! Though I am a frail creature, and still a sinner; yet let me not be a wicked man, nor a bold resolute offender; but live as one recovered from the death of sin, and take the way of good men, and assert the liberty of the Lord's freemen, and shun the confederacy of evil-doers, and hate the evil, that I myself do; and long, and pray, and strive, that I may still more and more cease to do it.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND discover me, O Lord, so to myself, that I
 “ may know the state of my soul, and not abide
 “ in the state of sin, nor be found in the way of sin-
 “ ners, nor enslaved under any wicked yoke, nor be-
 “ fotted with any filthy lust; but may arise out of my
 “ sins, and shake off every ill habit, and hate every
 “ false way, and flee for the life of my soul, and keep
 “ myself in the fear and love of God, looking for
 “ the mercy, and preparing for the glory, of our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XLVI.

Of ill Language discovering an ill Man.

THOUGH fine words are too often made the cover of foul designs; and some are upon their guard, to hide the evil that is in them, and to counterfeit more good than belongs to them; like hypocrites that go in disguises, and shew their skill
 in

in the art of carrying on intrigues, have their tongues tipt with the good expressions, that would make one believe, they mean nothing but well, when all is false, and stark naught within; yet where a man's talk is commonly vain, and frothy, loose and filthy, profane, and ungodly; how can he chuse but be vile and vicious, corrupt and impious himself! how could he, or durst he, so pour out of his mouth, if he had the grace and fear of God in his heart! needs must such streams flow from a polluted fountain; and it is no rash judgment, to pronounce upon him, according to that, which so fluently comes from him. For has not our Lord himself told us, that, "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks?" Mat. xii. 34. And as light as any can make of words (calling them but wind; and counting it a matter of nothing, what use a man makes of his tongue;) yet does not he, that shall doom us all at last, there hang even the whole of a man's state, upon the tenor of his words? ver. 37. "By thy words thou shalt be justified or "condemned." Hence are the issues of life and death, and weal or woe eternal depends upon it. For this is some of the corrupt fruit, produced by the corrupt tree. And thus the wicked creature utters but his own nature, and does just like himself. It is what we might expect from such a one; the very index of his mind, the true draught of himself by the pencil of his own tongue.

How silly then, and absurd is the attempt, to bring him off for a good honest man, that takes all the extravagant liberties of his tongue, to offend or poison, even all that hear him, with such frivolous, and such odious stuff, as is the usual entertainment he has for his companies? Can such a one have any clean and upright heart? Is it possible, there should be any principle of goodness? Believe it, who can. As soon should I believe a nasty dunghill, to be a

be a bed of sweet spices ; or the yelling of dogs, and braying of asses, to be fine harmonious music. It is past the power of any advocate, to save his credit that is owner of a foul tongue ; when he cannot forbear so to expose himself, but his speech bewrays him ; to tell what a one he is, that talks as he is wont. For the man is lost himself, who has so lost the government of his tongue. And what worthy reputation can he then retain, with any wise and good men ; the vein of whose discourse tends not to benefit, rather than to corrupt the hearers ? What comes out of a gracious man's mouth, favours of the grace that is in his heart. And this is the just character of such a one ; you shall not hear from him an oath, or any scurrilous expression ; nor so much as a bad word. No, but he has always some favourable discourse, that is worth the hearing, and tends to edifying ; which both signifies his mind to be good, and his desire also to do good.

O my soul ! this is a commendation worth thy ambition. And that I may not only have it, but deserve it, may my care be to order even my common communication, as becomes my holy profession, and accustom myself to such a habit of speaking, with another tongue, than men of a corrupt temper and vicious manners use to do ; that nothing may drop from me, but what makes for my own good fame ; and for the good use of them that hear me.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD, deliver this poor miserable world
 “ still more and more, from the mischief and
 “ plague that is brought upon it, by ill tongues.
 “ Restrain wicked men, from so publishing their
 “ own shame, and wronging others souls ; by their
 “ infectious and pernicious words. O make me
 “ conscientious

“ conscientious and careful of my words, as well as
 “ of my carriage; that I may not, by any of my
 “ evil speaking, make the way of truth to be evil
 “ spoken of; nor so offend my neighbours, and
 “ lose myself; but may use my tongue, to the praise
 “ of my God; that thou who didst make it, mayest
 “ be glorified by it, through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XLVII.

Of the carnal Mind,

THERE seems a contradiction in the terms; that the mind which is man's spiritual part, should be called carnal; or the fleshly mind, as Col. ii. 18. And O that the sad apostacy of man from the living God, had not furnished us with too ready a solution of the paradox! for now, alas, what is man, in his whole composition become, but even a lump of flesh? And his very mind so debased, and carnalized; as to lay out the main of his study, to cater for the flesh? And till it has got such a new turn, that we come to be renewed in the Spirit of our mind; at nothing higher does it aim, than the gratifications of the animal life. But that which our translation renders, “the carnal mind,” Rom. viii. 7. (φρονημα σαρκος;) it is the cogitation, the mind, or the lust of the flesh: what the flesh savours, wills, and wishes, *i. e.* what our unregenerate part (the principle in us, that is opposite to the Holy Spirit) naturally inclines to, and seeks after. Now this is deadly indeed, and baneful to the soul; because it swells

swells and rises up against God, and will not be under the rules and limitations of his holy law.

But if this be the evidence of an unregenerate state, to mind the things of the flesh; *i. e.* all that this world affords, for the ease and pleasure of the body: O my soul, what shall I think then of my condition? And have I not cause to fear myself in sorry case; when I cannot but be sensible, how much I do mind such things; and that they are the things, which do work in my thoughts, and carry away my desires? Here, would I not flatter myself in my own eyes; nor think more highly on my state than it deserves; but I must be fain to plead guilty, and acknowledge my sinful excesses: that I have gone, and still make bold to go, quite beyond my bounds: for which, I dare not offer at the defence and vindication of myself. Especially, when I hear one so much greater and better than myself, complaining, Rom. vii. 14. "I am carnal." (And a learned bishop is free to say, I give my voice on their side, that assign the messenger of Satan, which buffeted saint Paul, to be carnal concupiscence (Hack. Sermons, p. 201.) And he did not dream of the apostle's personating an unregenerate man. Rom. vii.) Yet for the peace of my mind, here am I necessitated to seek out such distinctions, as I may warrantably call in to my relief.

For there is the voluntary subjection to the power of a carnal mind: and there is the bewailed vassalage under its oppression. But to see the mischief, and cry out of it, is not the same case, as to be unconcerned at it, and love so to have it. Again, there is a sinful, and there is a needful minding of the things pertaining to the body. For all do mind them, and cannot chuse but do it; yea, ought to do it. The most, indeed, do mind them quite too much; and some of the best are forward to complain of it most. But the minding of earthly things,
under

under rebuke, Phil. iii. 19. And that minding or favouring the things of the flesh (which characterizes the unregenerate) Rom. viii. 6. must be understood, of the minding them, only, or mainly, and excessively; to the neglect or contempt of things spiritual and heavenly; to the excluding or postponing of those far greater and better things. When the carnal and worldly things, are esteemed above all, and pursued as all in all. Thus comes the guilt: and hence arises the danger. When the mind is so habituated to the things of this life; that it grows even of a piece with them; and is entertained and taken up among them, as in its proper element; and there recreated and pleased, as in its only paradise; till God is forgotten, and heaven is despised; and the most concerning and everlasting matters of another world, are thrown by, as not worth the minding; or counted so unagreeable and disrelishing, that the mind is listless and uneasy, to bestow any thoughts upon them. O here is the carnal mind in its killing power, threatening utter ruin to that soul, which is so pulled down; and this way (thus far) addicted and engaged. Yea, though the humour be restrained from shewing itself, in lewd pranks, filthy debauchery, and notorious abominations; yet will it prove as certain death and damnation, as if it broke out in all open transgression; where there is such a falling away from God, and breaking off with him, as destroys all the fitness and likelihood for his heavenly kingdom.

But yet, my soul! be not here desperately dejected, though thou findest thyself sore distempered; and the carnality of my mind not so cured, but the sores are yet running upon me; and the things of this world have too much place in me, and too great command over me. For even some of Christ's members, are called carnal, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 3. And what godly man upon earth, but carries about him
the

the body of this death? As a right and true man, may yet be a weak and sickly man; so is the new man truly, but not perfectly new. He is godly, and to be numbered among the saints; because he has got another nature, and an inheritance with them that are sanctified; and his denomination is from grace, as the major part; *i. e.* greater and stronger in virtue and efficacy; though exceeded by corruption, in bulk and quantity. And it is by comparison with others (in a class above them) who have got the start of them, that some godly men are called carnal: and with this may they be upbraided, indeed, to the reproach of their non-proficiency; yet must it not be objected, to the denial of God's grace, and their sincerity. For who, alas! does not groan under the oppression of remaining corruption? Who here has the holy principle, and better life, in the height and perfection? What mortal saints, are past the struggle between flesh and spirit? Till my Lord, then, send his messenger death, to come and call me out of the field; I cannot hope to be discharged from this warfare. Though never must I indulge and yield to the carnal mind; but labour under it, as my heavy burthen; and fight against it, as my deadly enemy; and long and pray and strive, for further deliverance from it, and higher advancement above it, to become more pure and godly, more spiritual and heavenly; yet, let me not conclude my case to be hopeless, because I have not hitherto got the conquest; nor overwhelm all my comfort and rejoicing in God's grace, with the sorrowful apprehension of that contrary part; which I find warring in me, to make head against it. But let me go away with my load, doing as well as I can; and waiting upon the Spirit of the Most High, for more grace still, to enable me to do better.

THE PRAYER.

“ **H**OLY God ! I am ashamed to think, how I
 “ have debased and plunged myself, into the
 “ low and brutish life : how earthly and carnal is
 “ my mind ; and how far from that holy spiritual
 “ frame, which becomes my heavenly calling ; and
 “ which behoves one that have found such gracious
 “ helps ; and that do enjoy such glorious hopes.
 “ Yea, I am afraid to think, what will be the issue of
 “ this foul dangerous distemper ; that hangs so hea-
 “ vy upon me. O thou great Almighty Physician
 “ of souls ! forgive and heal mine, I beseech thee,
 “ that has so greatly sinned against thee. And reco-
 “ ver and help me out of the depth, into which I
 “ am sunk : and bring my mind into a better frame,
 “ to a habit of holy thoughts ; and a bent and in-
 “ clination to the things of thy Spirit, and thy king-
 “ dom : that I may not be carnally minded, which
 “ is death ; but spiritually minded, which is life and
 “ and peace. That my mind, so well employed and
 “ taken up, with fit and worthy objects, may be se-
 “ rene and easy ; and my soul full of hope, and joy
 “ in God ; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

 MEDITATION XLVIII.

Of the Heart of Stone, and Heart of Flesh.

TO have a heart, that is easily drawn any way ;
 is a temper, that will sooner lead us to our
 hurt, than make us ever the better. And yet there
 is a stiffness in evil, and a hardness to be wrought
 upon by the good ; that threatens no less mischief
 and

spire and long after it; and never be satisfied with myself, till I experience the joyful possession of it. But though I groan still under many defects in it; and have it not in such a manner yet, as I would have it: yet let me not cry out, as one quite destitute: when here the very complaints of want, are some arguments of sense: and such as use to call their hearts stones, may have less cause, than others, that boast of their good case. Let me remember, that the new work, is not a perfect work: but that corrupt nature which breeds the stony heart, does still remain: and ever and anon, (upon God's withdrawing of his grace,) it disposes me to decline and relapse. To him therefore must I make my moan; that I may find relief: and humbly expect from him that has helped, to go on still helping me: till the remains, of this stone, that hang hard upon me, be all taken off me; and the heart of flesh, in its perfection, become the happy concomitant, of my everlasting glorification.

THE PRAYER.

“ **B**REAK in, Lord, with thy powerful grace,
 “ upon the obdurate hearts of impenitent sin-
 “ ners: to change and mollify them; and to make
 “ them perceive, how it is with them; and to take
 “ impressions from the applications made to them.
 “ My heart is hard, and stiff, and insensible, even as
 “ a stone: O take away this stony heart, and give
 “ me the heart of flesh: a heart open and ready, to
 “ receive the things of thy Spirit; tractable to the
 “ heavenly teaching; and forward to do all that
 “ thou requirest: a heart more broken for my sins,
 “ and more watchful and resolute against them;
 “ more awful under thy word, and more in love
 “ with my duty: fuller of melting affections in my
 “ prayers; easier under thy afflicting hand, more
 “ thankful

“ thankful for thy great goodness, and more transported with all thy sweet comforts, and thy rich mercies to me, in Jesus Christ.”

MEDITATION XLIX.

Of Strangeness to God.

O My soul! how many that may think themselves to stand well enough with God, as long as they carry on no open hostilities against him; are yet in a very ill state towards him, by reason of their inward strangeness to him; when so shy they are of him, have so little to do with him; and even altogether live in the world without him? Though such notices and remembrances they have of God, not only in their conscience, but in their very frame of soul and body; and all within them, and about them: That they cannot but observe and own him; as the great maker, and preserver of them and all the world: yet still is he to them the unknown God: and if he be in some of their thoughts; yet do they not like to retain him in their knowledge: but so live on, after their own humour and pleasure; as if they had no controuller: or as if God signified no more with them, than if indeed he were not at all. Such a state of estrangement, is our natural state: And as light as any can make of this condition; to be such out-lyers and excommunicate persons, cut off from any free intercourse with the God of salvation; alas! what is it, but even, aforehand, taking possession of damnation; and a kind of hell, here upon earth? To be without Christ, “aliens from the common-wealth of Israel; and strangers from the covenant of promise;” it is to be done without hope. Eph. ii. 12. “Having no hope;” but only a groundless presumption.

tion of our own heads. Yea, when so alienated from God, we are reckoned as enemies to him, Col. i. 21. For then are we despisers of him, that made us for communion with his blessed self; and shew ourselves all for another sort of society, with such as have more of our own likeness: that shall therefore, have more of our love and dearness. And though we are for keeping in with the friends whom we prize, and to keep up the correspondence, and obliging offices, that help to wear off the rust which else might grow, to wear off the kindness: yet here, we are mindless of the addresses, and cold to the devotions, that shall keep the fair understanding with heaven; and prevent a growing strangeness between God and our souls,

O my soul! is such estrangement from the Lord, thy choice and delight? I am sure, it is thy guilt and curse. And so to break off communion; and lose thyself, with the God of thy life; is the way to be for ever lost, and cast off by him; and sent away for ever accursed from him.

I was alienated some time: and that was a sad time! before I was brought nigh in Christ Jesus; lying shut out of doors, behind the great wall of separation; and (among all my other acquaintance in the world,) having no good acquaintance with my God: but cut off from all comfortable approximation, to the rock of my salvation. And O that there were no returns of such times, and such distempers upon me! but will a Christian name here, and a formal profession, save me harmless; or take off that strangeness, which lies at the very bottom; when even the heart is gone, and departed from the Lord? Will the scraping of a little outward acquaintance then, serve to fetch it back again? And when there was an estrangement even from the womb; O what do un-renewed sinners stand glozing over the matter; as if they had always been great with God, and mighty good
good

good friends still, from the beginning? And to what purpose, are my heartless attempts, and flourishing compliments with the searcher of hearts; when there is no downright fellowship, in deed and in truth! O never let me be so vain, as to think of making a concealment here; to carry my strangeness to God; as a strange matter: but let me humbly own it, and sadly bewail it, how much a stranger I have been: and (how, to my sin, and shame, and loss,) I have lived, (if one may call it living,) separate from the Lord: that the world has had me; and company, and vanity, and folly, and iniquity, have had me heartily; when my God has been forgotten, and put off, and the least of my concern has been with him. Here does my own heart fall foul upon me, for carrying so slightly, towards the most glorious majesty, and keeping no better touch with heaven; even since the gracious Lord, (of his mercy) has taken me into his family. Yea, my own heart must needs confess, what a revolting heart I have: how prone still to wander, and be gone; even after he has brought me home. But O how strangely must I forget myself, before I can be so strange to my God: and fly from him; to bestow myself another way, and find myself somewhat else to do, than to be taken up with him, who is the greatest and the best! O my soul! what does such carriage preface? And where is this way like to end? How shall I come off with him, at the last, if I continue such a stranger to him, even all my life? O let me look upon it, as a matter, not only of decency, but of necessity, to get out of this strangeness to the Lord: because all that are far from him shall perish: and the accustomed communion with him here, is that, which must fit me up, for the eternal blessed fruition of him hereafter. Let this then, if it will not draw me, yet drive me home; to renew my acquaintance, and amend my correspondence,
with

with him ; into whose hands I shall shortly fall ; and by whose sentence I must for ever abide.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Lord ! I have gone astray like a lost sheep ;
 “ and in my foolish and wicked wandering
 “ from thee, I have lost myself and endangered my
 “ soul, to be for ever lost. Forgive me, I beseech thee,
 “ in thy mercy, and reduce me to my duty. For
 “ though I can, too fast, strike out, and transgress my
 “ bounds ; to go after the course of this present
 “ world, a-whoring from the Lord : yet cannot I
 “ return, and find thee, O my God, if thou do not
 “ seek, and fetch me back, and open thyself to my
 “ soul, and bring me into thy blessed fellowship.
 “ O deal so merciful with me, gracious Lord, for thy
 “ own mercy’s sake. And help me so to get, and
 “ keep in with thee, that I may no more be a
 “ stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with
 “ the saints, and of the household of God : ever
 “ mindful of my Lord, used to thy presence ; living
 “ in thy love, and delighting in all the duties of inter-
 “ course, whereby I may still more and more, ingra-
 “ tiate myself with my God, through thy dear Son,
 “ my only Saviour. Amen.”

MEDITATION L.

Of Presumptuous Sins.

O My soul ! still I am a frail creature : and a frequent offender. But yet I would not be a daring transgressor, nor a presumptuous sinner : to run
 upon

upon any known guilt, with a bold face, and carry it off with a hardened heart, and a high hand. For such sins are none of the usual spots of God's children: but the foul badges, of those that belong to another father: who, with open eyes, and deliberate purpose, against all warning, and in confidence of escape, and impunity, can venture even upon the greatest wickedness, and count it but a very light matter. Tho' he that stands in the grace of God, is not got above the danger of all such falls, nor, for one moment, can be his own keeper, whenever the Lord withdraws that hand, which holds him up: O how do the mighty then fall, and even God's saints, (in whom he puts no trust,) act quite unlike themselves! and then, how do they open the mouths of religion's enemies, to cry out of them, for hypocrites and apostates, reprobate, and lost, past all recovery. But their Father, who is the Father of mercies, and well aware of their frailties, will not so lose his children, nor cast them off even for such offences. For he is the God, that pardons iniquity, transgression, and sin: not only some faults that are lesser: but, from the smallest to the greatest, one with another. And sure, his own children shall not find less pity, and favour with him, than any else that offend him.

Yet, O my soul! evermore may I dread to go, and make these woeful experiments, to throw myself down a precipice; because I believe, I shall come off with safety; or to break my bones, that I may have them well set, and knit again. For however the child of God, do not thus catch his death, and ruin; yet hereby does he get that which will stick to him; and pull him down with shame, and sad remorse. Happy then is the man, that fears always, to fall into the horror and mischief, attending such grievous wasting sins. O look thou, my soul, upon these falls, as the saddest things, that ever can befall me: and look up to him that keeps the feet of his saints, to
keep

keep me evermore by his grace from such dreadful falling. Nor would I only be restrained, (like the ravenous creature tied up in a chain, from that whereto he is impetuously bent) but desire to find my heart so turned, and my very nature so changed and renewed; that I may have no mind nor inclination to the evil: but distaste and abhor, all such hateful accursed things.

The way of presumption let me know it, that I may decline it, and take warning, never so to hazard my own undoing. What is this presuming then, but taking things to me; before they are ready for me? To catch at that, whereto I have no right: to build upon heaven's happiness without using the means to bring me thither: snatching it out of God's hands, upon my own terms; yea, making account of that blessed end, though I take the quite contrary way. And thus may I die of my very hope, when I hope only as I please; against all reason, and against all the Word of God; and presume all will be well; though I do never so ill, thinking to reconcile a loose conversation with the confidence of God's salvation, and reckoning all to be my own, though I am for nothing that he would have. O my soul! whoever would drive me out of such a hope, would help me over some of my worst danger. For I ought to despair of getting so preposterously to heaven, if ever I would in earnest, make sure of that blessed place; and not take the boldness to sin on, till I have sinned myself past all the rational hopes of that bliss, on which I so fondly presume. Though I am like then, to groan under manifold infirmities of lapsed nature, even as long as I dwell here in this house of clay; yet let me take heed that I count not my presumptions frailties; nor, from the umbrage and covert of that sad necessity, which I am under of sinning, run witting and willing upon any enormous crimes, or grievous sins. And then,
through

through the mercy promised in the covenant of grace, shall I stand clear in the sight of God, from my other sins: and he will impute to me none of my common failings, but accept me in the beloved of his soul, and favour me with the light of his countenance; when no presumptuous sins are admitted by me, to get the dominion over me.

THE PRAYER.

“**B**LESSED GOD, glorious in holiness!
 “ who canst not endure the workers of in-
 “ quity in thy sight, but wilt wound the hairy
 “ scalp of such as go on still in their trespasses!
 “ thou knowest my manifold transgressions, and
 “ my mighty sins; the provocations that have risen
 “ so high against thee, till I deserve to be abhorred
 “ and rejected by thee. They are too heavy for
 “ me to stand under, and too great for any, but
 “ the God infinitely good, as well as great, to pass
 “ over. O forgive me for thy own sake, and ac-
 “ cept me in thy dear Son. And after thou hast
 “ forgiven me so much, make me the more to love
 “ thee, and in more care still to please thee. O let
 “ it go against my heart, so to sin against my God.
 “ Let me be a greater stranger to all such great and
 “ strange sins. And as much as I would dread and
 “ decline, what assaults and endangers my life, let
 “ me tremble at, and shrink from, the sins that
 “ violate my conscience, and threaten ruin to my
 “ soul. It is thy work alone, great God! to keep
 “ back thy servant from presumptuous sins, thou
 “ canst frown the strongest foes down dead at thy
 “ feet: O let thy work, Lord, appear to thy ser-
 “ vant, in setting me out of the hands and power
 “ of such enemies, as are enemies of thy glory,
 “ as well as of my soul: that I may walk in my
 “ integrity, and find peace in my mind, and live in
 “ thy love, and sing thy praise, and rejoice to be
 “ accepted in thy sight. Amen.”

THE SIXTH DECAD.

MEDITATION LI.

Of wicked Men's spight at holiness.

O MY soul! what frequent instances do I see, of that inveterate enmity, which the serpentine brood has, against all the holy seed! it is a deadly pique that would destroy them, and an immortal core, that will never have done with them. It is an antipathy that admits of no reconciliation; where the wicked will not come to the righteous, and these cannot go to them. O what, from worldly and ungodly men is to be expected, but ill-will and wrath, and clamour and persecution for righteousness sake? Not only for maintaining the righteousness of faith (which makes one sometimes a kind of martyr among the self-justifiers, who will never hear talk of any justification through faith in the blood of Christ) but also for shewing any holiness of life; which is the spight of their hearts, because the reproach of their ways. Therefore cannot this world bear those that shine as lights in it, to confound the filthiness of it. The holy Lord himself cannot please them; and then, what fair quarter, can the sticklers
for

for his holiness find with them? They vent their spleen at his saints, under the notion of hypocrites; because they are not without their faults. But their indignation rises even against the Holy One of God, in whom was no manner of exception. His example was too bright, and his doctrine too straight for them. They could not abide him. They did nothing but oppose him, and set themselves to ruin both his name and his person. He met with some of the worst treatment, even from such as he most obliged. The very best friend was pursued as a public foe; and they could not be easy till they had rooted him out of the earth, who came to shew them the way to heaven. How then can his holy followers ever look to fare better from such kind of hands? And what strange thing if they be defamed, and run down, for espousing the holy cause? for even this shall be interpreted as an affront and defiance of them, to plead for that godliness which is so contrary to them; and to set up that pure undefiled religion, which is their derision and abomination. The godly man, that man whom God loves; whom do they so much loath? The Lord delights in him; but they stomach and abhor him. Instead of laying down their lives for him, they will be liker to take his life from him; and sooner seek the saints blood, than enter their communion and league. Such is the world's kindness to the Lord's darlings. The dearest to him are the hatefulest to them; and the most precious in his sight, as the scourging of all things, in theirs. They separate from them, and will have nothing to do with them, unless to ridicule them, or fall severe upon them. Whatever any do talk or think, of some being so good, they can have no enemies, but all must needs love them, it is but talk, and mistake. For if they be good indeed, with the holy good, the best and chief of goods (and without which, none is really good;)

good;) all that goodness shall not defend them: but many articles shall be found against them. Nor shall they escape, more than our holy Saviour himself could: who was so good in the height, as never man was; yet was not he persecuted and hurried out of the world, as not fit to live in it? Because the vile world could not bear so bright splendor: his goodness and holiness did so confound their faces, and gall their consciences; therefore must he die, because he was too good to live. There was his fault, that no fault was to be found in him. Yet that he might fall in form of justice, many matters were alledged against him. For the wicked gnash their teeth at the righteous; are eternal wranglers with him, and will never want occasion against him: he that is born after the Spirit, can never please them. The apostle is positive, 2 Tim. iii. 12. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." One time or other, one way or other, they must look for it.

But be it so, my soul, now for a while; yet never let me think of declining the holy way, to escape the wicked's rage; that they may cease to throw at me, and like the better of me; for when I cannot come off so well with them, nor find such hearty friends of them; does it not speak me more faithful to my Lord, that I am none of their party; and they call me in scorn, one of the godly? When I am used but like him, may not I comfortably hope to be the better used by him? When I am reproached for the name of Christ, and the enemies of holiness look awry upon me, and have never a good word for me, but turn my very religion to an objection, and make the godliness professed by me some of the indictment against me; and the more I strive to please God, the less I can please them; who will not let me alone, unless I will let his holy religion alone; is not all this, to be even as he was
in

in this world? And does it not then give me encouraging hope, that I am following my Saviour, in the way to his glory, where he went before me? And though some, that will not enter the kingdom of heaven themselves (to stop me out) lie snarling at me; yet how soon will this spight be spent, and all the bluster over? how soon shall I be out of the reach of tempests that beat upon me, and see the burnt light heavier on themselves, than all the storm they could raise against me? When my Lord shall recompense tribulation to them that trouble me; and consider my case, even as his own; nor only take my part, and avenge my quarrel, but give me peace and rest, and joy and comfort in him, as one that pleaded his cause; and (besides the contending with an evil and adulterous generation, in his defence;) suffered from a rude ungodly world, upon his account.

THE PRAYER.

“ O MY LORD! give me faithfulness and
 “ courage, to despise both the friendship and
 “ the enmity of this world, which is so hard a step-
 “ dame to the children of God. Make me so like
 “ to thee, and keep me so in with thee, that I may
 “ have thy kind looks, and thy dear love; and then
 “ shall I not droop under any of their dark frowns,
 “ or bitter scoffs. O let me be truly holy, and
 “ thine in sincerity; and then not doubt but thou
 “ wilt, in due time, rid me of all ungodly foes, and
 “ send them away to their own place; nor only
 “ bear me up against all their rage, but make me
 “ amends for all their wrongs. And turn their
 “ hearts, O God, by thy almighty grace, that they
 “ may be reconciled to thy truths, and come to
 “ love thy saints, and walk in thy ways. And do
 “ thou

“ thou come, Lord, to deliver thy abused and oppressed servants, to take home thy children to thy holy habitation in the heavens? and there to make thy people joyful and glorious for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION LII.

Of the bitter Zeal for Rites and Ceremonies.

O My soul! how strick and zealous may a man shew himself, for some of the lower and lesser things in religion; and yet be never the better man, nor have ever the more of pure religion and undefiled? were they not superstitious hypocrites, that “strained at gnats, and swallowed camels?” Matth. xxiii. 24. That carped at the Holy One of God, because he would not come up to all their punctilios? Were they not the same, that our Lord pronounced, “wo to them, when they tythed mint, annise, and cummin: but the while omitted judgment, mercy and faith; the weightier matters of the law?” ver. 23. And though the rituals and modalities now appointed in our religious worship, (at which some are offended,) are not to be brought in comparison, with those superinduced formalities and niceties of the foppish Pharisees: yet still may men contrast a deserved blame; by their turbulent defending even of things in themselves unblameable: when they lay too great a stress upon them, and place even all their religion in them: and break the peace of their neighbours, by an outrageous preference of them. May not I suspect this for another spirit, than that of Christ; which uscs here to carry with the greatest fury? Is it not the spirit of such, as little help
to

to credit that cause for which they so stickle? And how small reason has any church to be proud of such advocates, as discover scarce any thing of religion; beyond any of this violent ruffling, for the shells and garnishes of religion?

It is notorious, of what church they are the votaries, who count not themselves so much polluted with many a profane oath, as with one morsel of flesh on a fast-day; and make it a worse guilt, to drudge at any bodily work, than to be the most beastly drunk, or lewd on a holy day. (*Qui totam diem vacat temulentia, scortis, et aleæ, audit bellus homo.* — Erasmi.) A good regular son of the church; that cries, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," against the traditions of his dear mother; let him make never so bold with the commands of his heavenly Father. But some may see their own need, to express such a concern, more than ordinary, for the modes and externals of religion, when therein lies even all the religion they have. For, alas! how few of this temper are sincerely holy? The zeal of such as are in earnest pious, uses to work another way, and to spend itself upon far greater matters; more for the life, than the dress of religion: for that which commends a man to God, and that, whereof his kingdom does consist: which is not "meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. And for that, which the eternal Judge of quick and dead, will most enquire after, in the last great day; which, I cannot think, will be so much, whether we were masters of the ceremonies, and exact in all the parts of bodily exercise; as whether we were of his sheep, and led by his Spirit: and furnished with the wedding-garment of such faith, and grace, and holiness, as alone will fit us to enter in with the blessed bridegroom. For let a man proceed never so far in the ritual religion; let him exert never such heat

heat and light; for the little appendages of divine worship; yea, though he fly up to a super-conformity, beyond what is required in the very act for uniformity, and above statutes as well as Scriptures; yet, if he be not regenerate and converted, and made another man, than naturally he was; by a holy change upon his heart and life: he shall not see the Lord; nor inherit the kingdom of heaven. For to come there, our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Not in making more ado with out-sides, than they did: but in approving ourselves better men, than they were: who did too much, the one way, but we must do more than they did, the other; which is a far more excellent way.

O my soul! how great a swabble has been made among us, for that part of religion; wherein religion does least of all consist? Have not I seen some of the loosest livers, here take upon them, as the strictest regulators? Have I not heard such cry up the form of godliness, who could not forbear to scoff at the power? this they may think fit to condemn, as being that, which condemns them: but the other they can well enough away with; and afford to appear for; as not grinding upon their lusts, nor giving them any disturbance, in the way of their living, more at large.

Now though my public practice shews how far I am from contemning or neglecting the rules enjoined in the church, for decency and order; and though my conscientious care be, to avoid the giving of all just offence to any, for the rejecting even of a matter of indifferency, when established by lawful authority; yet still would I lay the greatest weight upon those things, that most of all deserve it; and not tear the coat of Christ to pieces, for the sake of some appendant fringes, which may look well enough upon it; and yet the garment might be still entire, though they were taken off it. Nor can I
count

count it any part of my duty to set all in a flame; for this or that ceremony. But what I am satisfied to observe, as the ordinance of man, yet cannot I think myself obliged, to hoise it up, above the laws of God, or into a competition with any divine sanction.

Nor shall it ever disturb me, to bear any pope's brand, for a libertine; because I will not be tied up in their superstitious fetters, fantastically to observe, all such days and diet, garbs and gestures, formalities and fopperies, about which, they shew such a scrupulous concern; but may I ever contend for the faith of Christ, and for all holiness and righteousness of heart and life, and all due regularity in thought, word, and deed; and still shew myself for the strictness of resisting temptations, and mortifying lusts and passions; and exercising myself to godliness, and striving to get in at the strait gate: (such a strictness on which salvation depends, and without which heaven is not to be had) may I warn others, and take heed myself, never to turn over to any loose way, that inclines to a cursed end. And then for that strictness, which nothing avails, to sanctify the man, or to save his soul; I shall leave it to such as lay more stress upon it, than I can do. For here I list not to be contentious with others; but would keep my own zeal and fervour, for the concerns far greater: even for those mighty things of religion, that are absolutely necessary to salvation.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** GOD, the infinite eternal Spirit! who requirest to be worshipped, agreeably to thy
 “ own pure and spiritual nature, in Spirit and
 “ in truth; teach and help me to address unto
 “ thee, after such a manner as shall be acceptable in
 Vol. II. B b “ thy

“ thy fight. Be merciful to my failings, and forgive me all my defects in thy service. O quicken me, to lay out my care and zeal, where I ought to bestow them ; and let me exert and spend the strength and activity of my soul, about the vitals and substantials, and necessary parts of thy holy religion ; such things as are most likely now to please thee, or hereafter to promote my comfortable accounts before thee ; in the day, when thou shalt judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LIII.

What incompetent judges of soul-saving things, are some (otherwise) acute and judicious men.

HOW often has it been my wonder, to observe the foul mistakes, and gross errors, the stupid oversights, and absurd blunders, in things of religion (those greatest of all matters ;) whereof many can shew themselves guilty ; that are men of fine parts, and great accomplishments ; yea, the wits and scholars ? For who would think, but they, of all others, that are so piercing, should find out the truth ? And that they, of so wide a reach, should grasp the knowledge of all needful things ? From whom should we expect a true account of religion, and good direction in the way of salvation, but from the rabbies and virtuofos, and such as are taken for the wise and understanding men of the world ? And whom would one more suspect to be out, and under delusions, than the illiterate and plebeians ; those of weak parts, or low education ? But yet

yet how frequently, my soul, does experience shew us the contrary? On the one hand, learned fools, that have never learned Christ: philosophical heretics, that lay snares to entrap his faith; and such doctors and teachers, as need to be tutored and taught, how they must believe, and what they must do, to the saving of their souls? And on the other hand, poor mechanics and rustics, that have open eyes heavenward, and a good sense of religion; are taught of God, to know the truth as it is in Jesus, to give a reason of the hope that is in them, and to be indeed wise to salvation? So has the gracious God, brought down the great things necessary to make us for ever happy, and laid them in common, that those of the highest reach, shall not go away with all, but such as are even in the lowest form, stand as fair for heaven as any. Where now, by faith all arms are of a length (as Mr. Herbert does express it;) and God is pleased to make proud knowledge bend and crouch, while grace fills up uneven nature.

What errors in religion, so manifest and fulsome, so wicked and monstrous; but have had shrewd and witty abettors and defenders? The Gentiles, the Papists, the Quakers, the Deists, the Atheists, want not all, for learned champions, and subtle apologists. Not only ridiculous superstition, and barbarous cruelty, but even palpable idolatry, shall find those that are called irrefragable doctors, to distinguish it into the best devotion, and the most exalted piety. The very Antichrist, shall be proved the chief friend of Christ. The man of sin, not only a good man and true, but his holiness. And he, whose coming is after the working of Satan; yet comes with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness. For if there were not some fair face put upon it, there would be no mystery of iniquity in it. But thus does it take, and go down, even with such as are
reputed

reputed the most sensible, knowing men. If they be such as receive not the love of the truth; are not for the simplicity that is in Christ; and will not endure that holy truth, which comes so close at home; as to regenerate their souls, and turn their hearts, and change their lives; God sends them the strong delusion, to believe a lie. And then, when once they have brought that judgment upon them; they will certainly find him too hard for them; and though they continue never so confident and conceited; it is only because they are blinded, and infatuated. Nor is this only to be seen, in the cheat of popery, but in the prevalence of every other damnable heresy, that is set up, and kept up, by men of false principles, or unhappy educations, or corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, which is after godliness; such as have more parts than piety, and better heads than hearts; that either stand up to serve a turn, and maintain the craft that is to maintain their life; or else (in a wantonness of wit) play with every thing in religion; and through the pride of their accomplishments, glory in shewing how able they are, to justify an uncommon, or opposed opinion.

But that any the sages and politicians of the world should be novices and ideots, in the saving truths of the gospel: yea, that even a master in Israel, should not know the things of God's Spirit; it cures my wonder, when I turn from what I see in the world; to that which I hear from the mouth of the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. That "not many wise men after the flesh are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world; to confound the wise." And Matth. xi. 25. Has "hid those things from the wise and prudent; which he has revealed unto babes." And Matth. xiii. 11. "Unto some it is given, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; when to others it is not given." And 1 Cor. ii. 8. "There is a wisdom of God, which none

"none of the princes of this world knew." Yea,
 which none that is unconverted, can know, ver. 14.
 "The natural man receives not the things of the
 "Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him:
 "neither can he know them: because they are spi-
 "ritually discerned." There lies the bar in his way:
 whatever be his endowments, in other respects. Be-
 cause he wants the very organ, (that spiritual eye,) by
 which alone spiritual things are to be seen. The eyes of
 his understanding have not been enlightened, by the re-
 newing work of God's Spirit. He has not obtained of
 Christ, the eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18. "To anoint his eyes
 that he may see:" nor received that anointing, 1 John. ii. 27. Which teacheth them
 that are born of God, all things that they have need to
 know; in order to their bliss eternal. So far, (it may be,) he
 has been from passing under this unction, or illumination;
 that he knows of no such thing, but only to ridicule, and scorn it. And then may a
 blind man, as well judge of colours; as this unregenerate
 man, can judge of spiritual matters. They are quite out of
 his sphere; till he becomes of quite another nature, and
 then, what do all his wit, and parts, and improvements,
 (so excellent in themselves) signify to him: when they make
 him never the wiser towards God; nor to do his soul any
 saving good? Nay, it is well, if they do not hang in his
 light, to stop out those better things accompanying
 salvation: which God reveals by his Spirit. Well, if the
 pride of his mighty comprehension, do not tempt him to
 despise and reject that divine revelation. For so, do
 those singular blessings, and ornaments, and advantages,
 of the natural parts, and acquired knowledge, prove only
 snares, and curses, and aggravations of his condemnation:
 as putting him in a capacity, the further to plague the
 world; and to pull the more stripes upon himself: and
 make him, too late, take up Saint Augustin's complaint;
 (nos com doctrinis

doctrinis nostris trudemur in infernum :—) we scholars, with all our quirks and subtilties, drop into hell : when the poor illiterate people, that better understand God than themselves, out-strip us ; and snatch the kingdom of heaven from us.

: O my soul ! thou knowest how much I honour and admire all good learning, as useful knowledge ; and rejoice, when ever I see its progress and improvement : yet never can I envy this jewel, lodged in an unsanctified breast : but, (in my heart,) do pity the misery of that wit, yea, the ignorance of that scholar ; who does not know God in Christ ; nor know his own accursed state out of Christ ; and the way of salvation, by the renewing grace of his Spirit, planted in the heart ; and producing holy fruits in the life. This is a learning, that comes not by study, but of God's teaching. The wisdom from above, which David begs so much of God : Psal. cxix. " That the Lord would open his eyes, and teach him ; and give him understanding in the way of " godliness." And I cannot but bewail the case of that man, who ever thinks himself too wise, and knowing ; to join with him in such praying. For so does he but abuse himself, in reckoning that wisdom to be his own ; which indeed he neither has, nor is like to have. For the wisdom which God imparts to his children, is unintelligible to the rest of the world. And they do but pass a peremptory judgment upon the deep things of God that are beyond their reach. Yea, they cry out of the new-birth ; and living by faith ; and walking in the Spirit ; as cant and gibberish ; nothing but humour and fancy, moping and melancholy, dreams and chimeras. And what is this, but to speak evil of the things they understand not ? When none greater bunglers, nor more baffled in religion ; than they, that will so take upon them, to dogmatize upon things, above their comprehension. And what Festus injuriously threw

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at Saint Paul, may too justly be charged upon some of these, that their wit and learning makes them mad: when they can take the boldness, to scoff at the way of God's word; the way of dependence on his Son; and resigning ourselves to the conduct of his Spirit; deride it as some fairy road; which will but lead the followers, into a fool's paradise: and set up their own schemes and whims; for the only models, by which all must be framed. Which is such an arrogant and desperate extravagance; as betrays the authors to be indeed beside themselves; and some of the worst fanatics in the world; that more do need a strict coercion, than deserve any one's imitation: when so shamefully wide of God's way themselves; and so solicitous and dangerous, to pervert and ruin others.

THE PRAYER.

“**O** LORD, the only-wise GOD! thou teachest
 “ so, as none else can do; to open the under-
 “ standing, and to engage the heart. Thy fear is
 “ the true wisdom! and to depart from the evil,
 “ which thou forbiddest, the best understanding. To
 “ study thy Word, and follow thy ways, will make us
 “ wiser than our enemies; yea, than our teachers and
 “ our seniors. O shew me thy ways, Lord! and lead
 “ me in thy truth. Convince those that are in er-
 “ ror; and humble those that lean on their own
 “ understanding. Make them submissive to thy
 “ Word; and bring them into the way of truth;
 “ shine in with thy light upon them, and reveal
 “ thy Son in them; that they may see with their
 “ eyes, and understand with their hearts, and be
 “ converted and healed, and eternally saved,
 “ through the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus
 “ Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LIV.

Of the loose sinner's sport and merriment.

THE humour of the age is so gay and jocular, as to laugh at all; and turn even every occurrent into matter of merriment. And O how sportive and jolly are many, that have the least reason for it; and will soon come to a lamentable conclusion of it? The fools that mock at sin, and make merry with their own misery, when they wind and screw and force one another into an uncouth sort of laughter, what do they make of it but a grining pleasure, an unnatural gamesomeness, a fit of madness? As long as they are quite out with God, and all is to-pieces between him and their souls, and his wrath abides upon them; and nothing but a dreadful prospect of his heavy judgments lies before them, when their great Master in heaven is against them, and they have lost themselves, with the best and only friend they have in the world, when they are on such ill terms with their eternal Judge; and under his killing frowns; when God is so angry, and the soul in such jeopardy: is this a time to be merry? O my soul! the mirth is not only superficial and absurd, but impudent and mad, to which a man so indulges in defiance of heaven, and against all good sense in the world. He forgets himself; yea, he is beside himself, that can be wanton and frolic and overjoyed, in such a state of enmity, where he wants all the requisites and ingredients of true peace and joy, to make him indeed easy and merry.

merry. Let him seek among boon companions, to hide from God, and from his own rueful conscience; alas! what can they but palliate his sores; yea, stab him with still new wounds! When they stiffen his neck, and harden his forehead, and enflame his wickedness, to make him sevenfold more the child of his infernal father. Such is the merry company, that helps to fool and fiddle him down to endless misery: such the dear friends, that never laugh louder, than to see him betrayed and undone for ever. And laugh he may along with them, even when he knows he shall come to curse them. But amidst the very rants, needs must he be in his dumps; and such a laughter is that, in which the heart cannot but be sorrowful.

O what can all the world's good avail, to make his heart glad? When no manner of sufficiency it has, to reach any further than the body? How justly does he bear the brand of a fool, Luke xii. 20. That bid his soul, "take thy ease, eat, drink and be merry," when he had much goods laid up for many years? For, alas! what is a barn full, or a world full; to make a soul full? What that is finite, can make that soul merry, which is of an infinite capacity? But where worldly goods cannot do; O what then will sinful lusts, but utterly mar all! what, but set conscience on the rack, and like dogs and furies, worry and torment the soul! they that rejoice in iniquity, shall soon smart for that desperate folly; and find it a sorry self-pleasing, in the evil-doing. While they laugh, and rant, and vapour; what is all the noise and flutter, but the flourishing cover of an empty nothing? Or setting a good face on the worst matters? To feign a joy and pleasure, where all is but gloss and sham; and hang out a flag to draw in fools, as if you could never be merry, but in such company; when never, indeed, must you think of leading any comfortable

lives, by following of their ways, who reckon to ease their minds, by taking still further liberties in their sins; and so, do but barter with the devil, for pleasure, and he will be sure to make them pay for it heavily, when they must be beholden to him, for making them merry. When they are hunting after ease and refreshment, in any ill haunts, and wicked experiments, they shall find them smarting pleasures, bleeding comforts, bloody spoils, which they get by such means, that will sting and cut, and tear their very hearts; and make them rue the time that ever they were such fools. All the mirth, what is it, but a spurt, a flash, a squib! the end never far from the beginning; and that end brings on a heavy reckoning. They live apace, and frisk and sing in the hot gleam; but whoever calls them masters of pleasure, never can I count them any masters of politics, to eat and drink, because to-morrow they must die; and shew no concern, but for that merry moment; which their souls must infinitely outlive; to play and wanton for a minute of an hour, and then be destitute and out of all for ever.

O how can I count myself ever the better or happier for that mirth and joy, which will forthwith all be over! and not only so come to an end, but end in heaviness; yea, and torment without an end; where the jolly tone will be quite altered, and all the joking and playing with lewdness and profaneness, be struck dead, in a lamentable exit. O may I never be fond of the mirth, that will leave such a filthy lasting relish behind, not covet to be any merrier than thy state, my soul, will well afford. Let me make light of all the biggest joys here, that will be insignificant to me, at my going off from hence. But that pleasure now let me dread, which then will put me to pain. And for the bedlams of this world, who fancy a heaven, and the only bills, in
their

their froth and giddy mirth; so far let me be from applauding of them, that my heart may bleed for them; and pray, that I may never have my share with them.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND the LORD rectify all our mistakes;
 “ and set us right in our thoughts, and our
 “ loves, of the true pleasure, and that joy which
 “ will endure for ever. O embitter to me the pleasures
 “ of sin, that I may not count them my pleasures,
 “ nor delight in the vain and mad mirth of
 “ loose sinners; nor rejoice in iniquity, nor be
 “ transported with worldly prosperity, or any wanton
 “ company, so as to forget my duty, and to
 “ please my mind with such stolen secrets, as will
 “ be bitterness in the latter end. O take my heart
 “ off the false vanishing joys of this present time;
 “ and make me to affect and chuse, and seek and
 “ pursue that joy and pleasure now, which will rejoice
 “ and please me for evermore. Amen.”

MEDITATION LV.

Of envying such as are high exalted.

O My soul! have I not some time been aggrieved at my low estate; and looked with an envious eye at those, whose station is superior to my own? As if I would take upon me, to quarrel with those unequal distributions of providence; which are, indeed, the effects of God's wise and kind care
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of the world; to make feet, as well as eyes, in the body: and such distinctions, and degrees of men; as are for the order and welfare, of the whole society. And how unreasonable here would be my dissatisfaction; when I can number so many more below, than above me? When, if I am not the head, neither am I the tail: and whatever room I do fill up; it is a favour, that I have any place at all in God's creation: and that I am not a worm or a clod: how much more, that I am a man? And of such a middling condition, between both the extremes; wherein commonly is found the best ease and satisfaction; which this world affords. When not burly with greatness, and burthened with honourable appendages: yet above the contempt of beggary; and the pressure of any grating necessity.

It was a noble Theban, who being left out at an election, was so well pleased to miss the honour, he went home rejoicing, that the city had so many more, fitter for the place than himself. But O how few are contented even with their honour? Rather aspiring still higher: and the very degrees of nobility are an eye sore, to nobles of a lower order, who go sick and uneasy, at others superiority. Some stars are obscured, by those of an excelling magnitude: but all of them quite put out by the sun. The highest of subjects are but a bigger sort of servants: and there, even I, (though much a meaner servant,) am yet their fellow. The peers of the realm themselves are ambitious to serve their sovereign: and there, can crouch and cringe to majesty: yea, be proud, so to darken and diminish themselves, as counting, it will make them shine the brighter, to be gilded with such royal beams.

Now, if from the plebeian, I ascend the scale of honour, to the gentleman, the esquire, the knight, the baron, the viscount, the earl, the marquiss, the duke, the prince, the king, the emperor, all these may raise
my

my wonder, if not my envy: they sound so great, they look so high. Yet let me remember that in Eccles. v. 8. "There are higher than they." For the lowest angel, yea, the least saint in heaven, is more above the biggest of them, than he that is supreme on the throne, is above the poorest beggar on the dunghill. Indeed, there is no end of ambition here on earth: but even the world's conqueror may whine, that he has no more worlds to conquer. Only God and heaven is large enough, to terminate the vast desires of a soul; which will be evermore aspiring; till it comes to enjoy what is infinite.

Though I would not anticipate the office of death; who will shortly level all in the dust: yet may I adventure to say, of the various distinctions now among men, as that person of true honour, G. H. said of church monuments, they sever the good fellowship of dust. Never do I find in scripture, (says he in a letter, to the lady, his mother,) blessed be the rich, or blessed be the noble: but "blessed be the meek; and blessed be the poor." Yet, O God! how do the most carry, as if they not only, not desired, but even feared to be blessed? Nay, does not this pious nobleman, who called honour, fair dust, and gilded clay, soon after complain, that yet this dust did some time rise, and prick his eyes? Yea, our Lord's disciples themselves were once at fierce words, which of them should be greatest. So charming a bait, is this world's glory; that in hours of temptation, it is ready to catch even those, who have so much a better prospect, of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, before them. So natural is it, to love the praise of men, more than the praise of God; that even grace itself can scarce suppress the humour. But yet so ill, my soul, is the humour; that if I suffer it to reign in me, it will bar me out from my Saviour. "For how can ye believe, (saith he) who receive honour one from another; and seek not
" the

“ the honour that comes from God only ?” John v. 41. So did the proud Pharisees stand off. John vii. 48. “ Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him ?” No, they thought it a disparagement to them : he did not look gay and splendid enough for them ; who valued nothing, but what appeared great and renowned, in the eye of this world.

But shall I envy such, whose lofty stations do but expose them to the more dangerous temptations ? Shall I pine at their high degree, which gives them never the better place ; but threatens them with the more dreadful fall ? Should I not rather look with a compassionate, than an invidious eye, upon that height ? which sets them never the nearer to heaven, but gives them a great deal the harder task, to get thither ? If I envy any, my soul, let it be rather the domestics and attendants of the King of Heaven ; “ that cast their crowns before the throne of him, who lives for ever and ever :” Rev. vi. 10. And count it their highest honour, to empty themselves of their honour ; and resign up all to him, who is all in all. For what so glorious, as to be retained, and found faithful, in his service ? So is the heavenly state itself described : Rev. xxii. 3. “ His servants shall serve him.” They need no greater honour. For his servants are also the children of his family, and the heirs of glory. And what heraldry can go so high, as “ our Father which art in heaven !” Who so high-born, as he that is born of God ; a child of the most high, that bears the image of the heavenly ? To have a name written in heaven ; O how far is it, above all the names on earth ! to have a new nature ; how much nobler, than to be of the most antient house ! what though I be left behind in the world ; when I am owned of the Lord ? For him to say, as Isa. xliii. 1. “ I have called thee by thy name ;” how much more is it, than to be known

known and admired of all the world! when to many men of note, he may say at last, "I know you not. For not many noble are called." 1 Cor. vi. 26. No, there is somewhat uses to call them another way: they will not stain their honour to come upon this submission, to a despised Saviour. They see no such great matter in it, to be Christ's mother, and sister, and brother. They who scorn their brethren, as mechanics; why should they not also disown the apostles of our Lord, as such? Yea, and the Redeemer himself; as the carpenter's son? And shall I then envy them their honour; which they so abuse, to dishonour themselves; yea, and the Lord of glory? This is an honour that shall not run long in their veins: the bubble will soon break; and the shadow flee away. O what is that glory, from the blood running in our veins, to the glory that redounds from the good done in our lives? May I but be numbered with them, whom the Lord will honour; and upon whom rests the Spirit of God, and of glory: and then, take who will, for me, all that the world can contribute, to make them great and renowned. I know, they are not rich dresses, nor high places; but pure virtues, and heavenly graces, that truly do ennoble the owners. Nor can I count it so honourable, to glare like blazing frightful comets; as to shine like sweet useful lights in the world. Nay, let who will, take it for a paradox, there is no bearing, in any escutcheon, like the bearing of the cross of Christ; in which his followers do, and well may glory; to the contempt of all worldly glory. O what so great correspondence, as to be great with the blessed God! And what so great a thing can the world shew, as a heart that is above all the greatness of this world! to have the top of all our kindred, the Most High himself; our house, heaven; our garden, paradise; our diet, manna; our cloathing, the garments of salvation; our jewels, the graces of God's Spirit;

Spirit ; our attendants, the angels of light ; and our inheritance, a glorious everlasting kingdom : O how does this cloud all the royalties of the world ! my soul ! return to thy rest ; gaze no longer with admiration, at the great things upon earth ; but count all mean and contemptible, even as loss and dung, for thy part in Christ ; and the joyful hope of his glory in the heavens.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** MY blessed LORD and SAVIOUR ! whose
 “ kingdom is not of this world, and who
 “ couldest not be seduced with all the glory of the
 “ world ; but didst decline every thing that was
 “ great and pompous in it ; and by thy example
 “ and thy gospel hast taught us, to undervalue and
 “ despise all that is here, for the sake of those glo-
 “ rious things to be enjoyed in thy heavenly king-
 “ dom : help me to follow thee, in meekness and
 “ lowliness of heart ; and in a heavenly mind, and
 “ contempt of the world. O keep me from envy-
 “ ing the height and gallantry of the noble and
 “ mighty ; and let me not grudge at their exalta-
 “ tion, but rest satisfied in my own condition, and
 “ be ambitious only of the honour of thy saints ;
 “ and the favour of my Lord, and the glorious en-
 “ joyment of God blessed for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION LVI.

When reduced to a low, indigent condition.

“ **G**IVE me neither poverty nor riches ; ” is
 a prayer, that was thought fit to be re-
 corded in Holy Scripture, Prov. xxx. 8. For, as
 wealth is full of the snares, which catch so many ;
 both

Both to please them, and to ruin them : so does want throw a man upon hard shifts, among the briars ; where his patience is tried to the quick ; and his integrity in danger to be lost. Yet is poverty an evil that may be borne, though not a good to be sought. I should not be forward to make choice of it ; but yet when God chuses it for me, I must not repine at it. And here is a work, worthy of thee, my heavenly soul, to surmount all the worldly straits. For while I live in the flesh, that needs continual supplies ; and will be out of sorts, when those supplies are out of the way ; it is a trial that strikes home into me, and not easy to be endured by me. Poverty will be tempting me, to stretch forth my hand to iniquity, and to help myself indirectly. And O how apt is the heart to fail, and the spirits to sink, when the cruse of oil fails, and the barrel of meal is spent ? When the springs are dried up, or the channel intercepted, and the usual succours removed, that I am brought into a wilderness-state, to seek bread in desolate places : O with how much ado then, is that desperate cry held in, “ Can God “ provide a table in the wilderness ? ” All is gone : what shall I have, to keep me alive ? As good die, as live in such penury and misery.

But remember here, my soul, how much thou art better than the body ; and how much the pleasing of my God is to be preferred, before the pleasing of my flesh ; and the meat enduring to everlasting life, before that which perisheth ; and of what small consideration it is, how I fare here : so that I have the blessed fund, to live comfortably upon for ever. Yea, consider, how unreasonable is the complaint, of God’s withholding those provisions for some-time, which so great a while he has vouchsafed, and which I so long time have abused. Is he bound still to feed an enemy ? And shall he never make me know myself, and my keeper ; nor to understand

his bounty, and my duty, by the want : which I would not learn by the enjoyment ? Can I justly murmur ; when I so justly suffer ? O why should I complain, that endure so much less than I deserve ?

Yet let me not be out of heart, when I am in his hands ; who, in judgment, uses to remember mercy ; but depend upon his power and providence, his goodness, and promises ; who has ways to help, that I know not ; and seeking first his kingdom, and its righteousness ; I have his Word then, that the rest shall be added ; even as much as he knows to be fit, and for my good. O let me turn the complaints of my wants, into complaints of my sins ; and my murmurs at things of the world, into prayers to the Lord. And if I but continue praying, I shall not then alway continue wanting. Nay, though I die begging, shall find no cause of complaining, but presently get up, to live for ever rejoicing. Let it be then least in my thoughts, what portion my Father is pleased to allot me in this life, so that I have the portion of his children in the next ; and after I have been kept short here for a short while, I be sure of the glorious inheritance, to last for ages everlasting.

THE PRAYER.

“ **I** Desire still to submit to thy will, O my GOD,
 “ whatever be my lot in this world ; and to
 “ think that state best for me, to which thou art
 “ pleased to call me. O give me thy Christ, and make
 “ me rich in thy grace, and joyful in the hope of
 “ thy glory ; and then shall I have cause to bless
 “ thee, for using me so well, let things at present
 “ go never so ill. Make my condition easy to my
 “ mind ; or frame my mind, to a satisfaction with
 “ my

“ my condition. And though I lose, and want, or
 “ suffer, now by the way ; yet make all work and
 “ succeed to my advantage, and comfort, in the
 “ end. And let me have thy blessed self, O God,
 “ for my Father, and Saviour, and Comforter, and
 “ portion for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION LVII.

Of our natural impotence.

THAT we are not able to stir a step, to lift up a hand, or so much as to think a thought, without the help and concurrence of the first Mover, the great Lord and Giver of life and power, to do all that ever we do ; this, though true, yet a further truth does Holy Scripture intend, when it puts us in mind of that natural imbecility, which imports our insufficiency for every holy duty, and for the performance of any thing, tending to make us for ever happy. For when Christ died for us ; he found us without strength, Rom. v. 6. Not only a little weakened by the fall, but quite disabled, “ So that without him, we can do nothing,” John xv. 5. Not, but think a good thought. No, “ we are not sufficient to think any thing, as of ourselves,” 2 Cor. iii. 5. And where we cannot so much as form the embryo in the womb (those thoughts, which are actions in their infancy ;) how then are we like to bring the good to its maturity ? Alas, my soul ! what can dead men contribute, to their own restoration ? And yet no better, in our state of nature, are we all represented, Eph. ii. 1. So
 that

that our blessed Redeemer's kind work upon us, is not only to heal the sick, but to revive the dead, And if such be the work, O what power have we then to set about it, or to do any thing towards it! such humble thoughts does our church teach us to conceive of ourselves, that we have no power of ourselves to keep ourselves; but our Lord grants us the Spirit both to think, as well as to do, the things that are right. O what strangers then are they to their true selves, who think that they have all in their own hands, to do whatever they would whenever they have a mind! Never can I admire the Pelagian's understanding, nor any advocate of depraved nature, or predicators of man's free-will, and ability to effect mighty matters, and to do his own business. But sure I had better hearken to God's Word, that tells me, "thou hast destroyed thyself," Hof. xiii. 9. than espouse their proud tenets, who flatter sinful man, with an inherent power that he has, to make himself to differ; and lay out much of their art and study, and many attempts and great efforts, to secure all in their own custody, and to render the grace of God, and his Spirit's influence, of little concern, but only for the name, that they might not be thought utterly to disown any such thing (so to take off the odium lying upon their opinion.) They will allow the necessity of somewhat which they call grace, *i. e.* some general co-operation and assistance of the divine power; but not such especial grace, as shall, itself, turn the scale, and work by its own almighty efficacy, without any dependence on man's will.

However it be granted, the man, in his fallen state, is not a stock or brute, void of reason and will, and freedom, in things natural and civil; to determine and move himself any way of his own accord: yet does not this infer any power that he has, to chuse and pursue the holy saving good. And when we
are

are bid, to "make us new hearts, and new spirits:" Ezek. xviii. 31. It shews us indeed, what we are bound to have, but not what is in our power to command. The duty is ours: but the gift is his, who takes it to himself; chap. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart will I put into you." So the making of the tree good, and his fruit good, Mat. xii. 33. does not describe our power, but the order of nature, to be looked after: because it is vain, to expect good fruit, from a bad tree. But then, who is it, but the maker of all things, that can make the good tree? One would think, there should be no occasion, for the confutation of that arrogant opinion, which gives to man the glory of his own salvation: but that pride, is so great a part of our natural corruption: and man that has lost himself, yet would still be something more than comes to his share: and thinks more highly of himself, than he ought to think: till grace comes to take hold of him, and pulls him down; to make him see, that he is nothing of himself; and at best, but only by the grace of God, that he is, what he is.

But where some do so proudly gainsay the doctrine of man's natural impotence; how do others wickedly abuse it; to excuse for their sins; and justify all their sloth, and neglect of duty: and taking no care to do any thing in religion, for working out their salvation; because it is God that worketh all in all? Now here, my soul, be it never so little that I can do: yet let me beware of omitting but that little; lest I become inexcusable, for not doing, what I might have done: for not rousing, to escape the danger; which I saw, nor stirring up myself, to take hold of God, nor stirring up his grace in me; but folding my hands to sleep, and standing all the day idle; when the Lord commands me, to watch and strive, and labour, and abound in his work; and continue instant in prayer, to him who is able to relieve

relieve me; and whose grace is sufficient for me. The slothful servant is called a wicked servant. Mat. xxv. 26. And because he was unprofitable "cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," ver. 30. But when I call upon the Lord, in whose hands lies my help; I have this promise then to be heard: and that if I ask, and seek, and knock; I shall receive and find, and have a door of mercy opened to me: all that I need and desire, done for me. This good use then, let me make of my own insufficiency; to learn humility; and carry as becomes a poor helpless creature and miserable sinner: abasing myself the lower; and giving myself the more unto prayer: from my necessity, learning importunity, and crying mightily to the Father of Mercies, to remember me in my low estate; and to the Lord Almighty, to do the work worthy of himself; in helping me out, who have disabled myself. For his power is magnified in weakness: and what is impossible with men, is most easy with God: yea the greater will be his glory, to do that, which I am not able to effect myself, and which all the world else cannot do for me.

THE PRAYER.

" **O** Lord, my life and strength; without whom
 " I can do nothing: and of whose only gift
 " and help it is, that I am enabled to do thee any
 " true and acceptable service: I acknowledge and
 " bewail the impotence, and distemper of my na-
 " ture? And the indisposedness, and naughtiness of
 " my heart; that makes me so insufficient for my
 " duty, and even to every good work reprobate.
 " O merciful Father! look in pity upon me: and
 " with thy Almighty power, come to my succour.
 " Lord be thou my Helper, and my Saviour. Reveal
 " thy glorious arm to bring me help, and grace suf-
 " ficient

“ ficient for me. O let me find my God, that made
 “ heaven and earth present with me; and thy blef-
 “ sed Spirit, working mightily in me: that I, who
 “ am so insufficient of myself, may be enabled to
 “ think and will, and purpose and perform, the
 “ things that shall be pleasing in thy sight; through
 “ thy beloved Son, my Lord Redeemer. Amen.”

MEDITATION LVIII.

Of mourning for the public abominations.

TO find fault, and complain of others sins is the
 easy common subject; which some are apt to
 fall upon out of pride; the more to set off them-
 selves: some out of ill humour, to disgorge their
 stomachs on their neighbours: and a few, out of
 conscientious concern; as hating and lamenting the
 wickedness, which so much dishonours God, and
 threatens the ruin of so many souls. Now in many
 cases, my soul, this is as far as I can go: to bewail
 the evils, which I am not able to redress: and to shew
 my trouble, for that which is past may cure. Such
 a melting temper may expose one to some mens cen-
 sure: but it is the way to God's favour. And they
 that count it a silly weakness; what will they say to
 him, that durst encounter the lion and the bear,
 and the mighty giant; and was not afraid of “ ten
 “ thousand that set themselves against him round a-
 “ bout:” and yet tells the Lord, Psal. cxix. 136.
 “ Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because
 “ men keep not thy law?” Yea, what will they say
 of the great captain of our salvation; when the sins
 of a city, that were plucking down vengeance on
 their heads, fetched out tears from his eyes? Luke
 xix. 44. It is true, this sorrowful concern for sins,
 should

should first be shewed for my own. For if sin be the matter of lamentation; how absurd were it, to express a quick repentment of others sins; and to make light of those at home; which are far more pernicious to me, than any one's else can be? But yet the flood that breaks out in bemoaning my own sins, must also spread further; to overflow a sinful land, and an evil world. The lewd pranks and wicked villanies, almost every where committed, that tickle the fancies of senseless creatures; and transport them into jollity and laughter; should vex my soul and pierce my heart; and nothing ought to cast a sadder damp upon my mind, nor to set heavier upon my spirit, than to see the creatures of such a noble make, near allied to angels, debase and brutify themselves; to commit all filthiness with greediness: yea, to see the Lord's obliged, play the rebels, against him that made them, and keeps them. Can I forbear to be grieved with those, that so "rise up against him;" as his servant was? Psal. cxxxix. 21. And that righteous man, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. "dwelling among the wicked," found the daily vexation, of their filthy conversation. Though fools can make sport with their sins; because they are insensible of their case: shall not I, whom God hath made to see whither their ways are carrying them, be sorry for them? And when I see even death's marks upon them, and the everlasting wrath, at which they make but a scoff, ready to seize them: shall I not weep over them; but shew an unrelenting heart, as one that cares not what becomes of them; though they should most grievously suffer, and that for ever? When I am cast among the company, where I find too much cause to cry out with Abraham, "Surely the fear of God is not in this place:" and see and observe such profaneness, and uncleanness, carried on with impudence; as even flies in the face of God, and offers the highest affront to my greatest Lord,
and

and dearest friend, my heavenly Father, my only Saviour; and makes the most fearful havock among those precious souls; which by such means are sinking even into endless perdition: O can I bear up, with a stout heart; as one that nothing regards the matter?

And will any then upbraid me, for peevish and pragmatical, sour and melancholy; to signify my distaste and trouble, grief and anguish, upon such accounts? Let the crew of profligate sinners, cry out of the mourners in Zion; for offering to interrupt their delights, and spoil their meetings; (those riotous conventions, where nothing gives such joy and triumph, as the vilest carriage, the most ungodly provocations, and scandalous abominations:) O my soul! how canst thou pretend to the fear and love of God, and not be nearly touched, and sharply afflicted, at such rude insolencies, against the Majesty of heaven? Dost thou not know, who are his favourites, and marked for deliverance from the judgments, that shall sweep away others? See Ezek. ix.

4. And thou shalt find, they are such as "sighed" and cried, for all the abominations done in the "midst of the city." Such mourning then appears to be the means of escaping: and the sowing in tears, a preparative to the reaping in joy. The mourners, whom one would think wretched, "they are blessed, and shall be comforted," Matth. v. 4.

Shall I not then, be at the trouble of grieving on their account, who give me the sad occasion for it? Ay, but my out-cries must be against the sins: not piques and invectives against the persons. Though they give me a sore trial; yet must not I fret myself to do evil. Where my patience is loaded; yet let not my wrath be inflamed. And where I am not like to redress the grievances which I groan under; let me rather mourn in secret, than quarrel in public. And to balance the affliction, which I endure for others; let me weigh over against it, the work

of God's grace on my own soul; which is the spring that feeds those running streams. For how much better may I bear the pressure, when it is grace that makes my heart so tender? Rather let me be one of the most pensive mourners, than one of the jolliest sinners, in Zion. Never doubting, but God will once wipe from my eyes, all the tears that I shed for his sake: and the weeping at present, shall end in rejoicing for ever; after all the occasions of that sorrow shall be removed; and eternal glorious rewards, and the sweetest of all comforts, for such mourners, succeed, to be for ever enjoyed.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Lord, the holy God, who art so highly dishonoured, and provoked, by sinful men, even every day, and every where: give me a soft relenting heart, to bewail and lament my own sins, and wickedness of the times and places, in which I live: that I may not take pleasure in such evil, nor to be unconcerned at it; but (as a grievous burthen,) groan under it, and sorrow for it: and so lay to heart other sins, that I may not be a partaker of them. So mourn, that I may be comforted; and so afflict my soul, for the things which delight the wicked; that I may have such a testimony of conscience, as shall be my rejoicing. Pity, Lord, those that have not hearts to pity themselves: and relieve thy servants, that grieve for the abominations of others. O let them see of the travail of their souls, and be refreshed: that thy church also may be thus enlarged; and thy name more glorified, through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LIX.

Of loving that which is good.

HOW well were it for many, who are so forward to declare, they are for any thing that is good, if here they could but make their words good? But what, alas, is the good which they mean? What but some seeming fictitious good? Either the worldly good; as good bargains, and good increase and advantage, to improve to their estate and add to their wealth: or else the fleshly good; as good meat and drink and cloaths, sweet entertainments, and frolicksome company, and jolly doings, to please their bodies and humour their lusts. Such kind of good, even the worst of men are most for: and who more eager upon it than they? Indeed it is the excessive love of this good, that makes them so bad; and is like to bring upon them the extremest of all evils. But the moral, virtuous, holy good, that good which pleases God, and would do the soul most good, and best deserves the name of good: it is the good which they more do loath, than love. O what stomach have they to it? What do they care for it? Good books, good sermons, good prayers, good and godly men, good and holy living; are these their beloved goods? Alas, do not they shun them? Are they not quite off them? Have they any kindness this way? Do not they stand just otherwise affected? Such good things, are too good for them: and the best food of their souls will not down with them. No, but trash and vanity, folly and iniquity, they are set upon; only the satisfaction of a brute can

give

give them content : and what is minded and loved, by the beasts of the people, is all their delight. Thus are many pursuing and catching at the good ; which when they have, will turn to no account, to do them any good : it is well, if they do not run themselves out of all real and eternal good ; by their wild and eager chase, of such shadows and appearances of good. O my soul ! God himself is the only good, that is truly, fully, and everlastingly good. And he spake like himself ; what none else in the world can verify ; Jer. xxxi. 14. “ My people shall be satisfied with my goodness.” All other people are uneasy, and still reaching after somewhat further than they have ; to give their souls the content, which yet they cannot find. But here, the most capacious soul has room enough to expatiate ; and may still discover such infinite depths of more good, as are never to be fathomed. O then how good is it to draw nigh to God ? And at what a wretched loss must they be, that are departed from him ; and searching for other goods out of him ? That cannot relish, but disgust, the good of his grace and holiness ; and make it none of their desire, nor their care to be doing good, nor to be rich in good works : but live like the beasts ; and are like to inherit the portion of devils, and never to see the good of God’s chosen, because they could not abide the good of his prescribing.

O my soul ! whoever dislike and scorn the holy good, let that be the good, ever amiable in my eyes, to take my heart. For I was made to do good ; and that deserves my highest esteem, which makes me likest to my God. O what should I so love, as that which is most lovely ? And that which will not cheat me with vain shews, but answer home to the question, *Cui bono* ? And yield me the truth, the substance, the permanence of good ? For by doing well, I shall be sure to fare well ; and by patient continuance in well-doing, reach to life everlasting ;

lasting; when they that have no kindness for this holy good, but are fallen out with it, and hate the way, and even the sight of God's saints, and count it a happy escape to slip the yoke of Christ, shall have all their good in this life, and eat the bitter cursed fruits of their own wretched choice, in the next; by approving things excellent, I shall approve myself a man in understanding, and shew the opened eyes, and enlightened mind; so to espouse God's loves; and appear for the things, whereof he has declared himself in favour, and do that which is the most great and worthy, to imitate the God of glory. O what such peace, as in loving his law? What such pleasure, as to please the Lord? And when I taste that he is good; and my own experience tells me, how good it is, to do good; and I cannot do any office of piety, any labour of love, or work of mercy, but thou feelest, my soul, a heavenly satisfaction and unspeakable refreshment: O what examples then, or exclamations of any unexperienced or disaffected persons, shall ever drive me off those holy ways, which I find and know, to be the ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace? And thus chusing good, I shall have good: and from the Lord, that loveth righteousness, shall find countenance and recompence, for such my loving of the righteous good: yea, find, that the greatest kindness I could do to myself, was to be doing good all the days of my life.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** My GOD! thou art infinitely good, and
 “ hast shewed me what is good; and what
 “ thou requirest of me, for the promoting of my
 “ own chiefest good. Give me (I beseech thee)
 “ eyes enlightened, to see the surpassing loveliness
 “ and

“ and excellence of the holy, saving good, and a heart, in earnest, enamoured with it; that I may not only talk of loving that which is good, but give the convincing proof of such love, by my following after it, and cleaving to it, and making still further progress in it; and giving myself, to receive, and to do, still more and more of that good, which will most comfort me here; and do me the greatest of all good for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION LX.

Of rejoicing to see the grace of God.

IF by grace we are saved, and nothing under regeneration, will avail to salvation; no honesty or civility, sobriety or courtesy (how commendable soever) can of themselves bring a man to heaven, except he be converted, and renewed by God's Holy Spirit and heavenly grace: how then, my soul, can I take any true satisfaction and comfort in such my friends and neighbours, upon whom I can discern no hopeful indication of those good things that do accompany salvation? This grace of God, it is true, I cannot behold, by a direct intuition, and looking into mens hearts; yet may I discover it to content, by observing its effects breaking out in their words and lives: when I perceive that a man is not of the common worldly carnal strain, but uses and loves to be speaking of and for God, and things holy and heavenly: when he favours that which is spiritual; and shews his concern and zeal for a serious religion;

gion; and gives himself a fair example, not only for the upright orderly carriage among men, but for prayer and devotion, and all the worship of God: in such promising criterions, and good evidences of grace shall my charitable judgment acquiesce. Though such as cannot see the grace of God, or will not see it (as not caring for the sight;) do cavil and wrangle on; and are so curious in criticizing upon the children of God, as if they had a mind to unfaint the whole generation, and to cashier them all out of the world; and will hardly own ever a one of them to be right; how much soever they may exceed any of their own fraternity; yet should I count it no good sign of my own grace, to be so censorious of all that appears in others. For still I am to remember, that even God's children have their spots; and it is not for me, to condemn them, as counterfeit; because they are imperfect. But I will prize the gold; though I cannot find it, without its alloy and dross. I will honour and admire the seed of God: let it seem never so small, or ill-lodged in the dirt. Yea, I shall ever count it the most sweet and lovely spectacle; refreshing and delightful, even as the opening of heaven: all amiableness and beauty, drawn upon that soul; where was nothing before, but ugliness and deformity. To see the poor souls that were ready to perish, rescued out of the jaws of the destroyer, to see the grace of God, too strong for all the force of the devil; to see them scorn the baits, which once they were so greedy to swallow; and live above the world, which once had them quite under: to see the dull and careless, turn devout and zealous; yea, the wolves transformed into lambs; and even the stones into Abraham's children: to see the moral honest man, that hugged himself, as above all the need of conversion, seized by this mighty grace; and thrown down from his altitudes; (like Saul to the ground;)

to find what a base wretch, and dead lump of formality he was; and thenceforward, to commence a godly man, a devout Christian, a heavenly believer, flourishing in the garments of salvation; and growing up with the increase of God; receiving the word with gladness, melting under it, and exceedingly taken with it: O here is the little sister, that had no breasts, become fruitful; the lost found, the dead raised; and the dry bones made to live. Thus such as were wont to grieve my mind, and, sadden my soul, come to refresh my bowels, and rejoice my heart. Before, I travailed in birth for them: now I take hearty content, and sweet comfort in them. And the conversion, the renovation, the recovery, and prosperity of their souls, it is abundantly more to me, than all their good humour, and kind words, and obliging favours; and all their outward successes, or worldly advancements.

Let who will count the grace of God, their eyesore; and be disturbed to see the blessed work: let them throw their scoffs and dirt at it: and when this grace has singled out any one from among them, signify nothing so much as their spight and vengeance against them: (it is the distasteful sight, that raises their choler, and puts them all in a ferment and disorder:) let them rejoice in iniquity, and make themselves merry with others misery: O shall not I rejoice in that, which the Lord creates; when he "creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy?" Shall not I be glad of any additions, to the happy number of such as shall be saved? Shall not I take pleasure in my dear brethren, and fellow-members in Christ Jesus? Shall not I bless God for them, and love his own image in them, and care for them, as the excellent of the earth; yea, as the heirs of heaven? I could not but suspect all my own grace, were I not so taken and pleased with
it

it in others. O my soul, whoever is here offended, so will not I be; but herein I do rejoice, and will rejoice. Yea, I will take such rejoicing for an indication of the good temper, and hopeful case of my own soul; and so rejoicing in the grace of God, I may also rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THE PRAYER.

“**B**E pleased, O LORD, to diffuse and spread
 “ thy heavenly grace still wider and further
 “ among us; to reach and bless even the poor
 “ souls that are yet destitute of it; to make the
 “ barren deserts, even as the garden of the Lord;
 “ and to rejoice the hearts of all such as are zealous
 “ for the glory of thy name, and the salvation of
 “ their neighbours souls. O give me eyes to see
 “ and perceive thy grace; and a heart to admire
 “ and love it, wherever I find it; to take pleasure
 “ in it, and give all the encouragement that I can
 “ to it. That I may have the comfortable sense of
 “ it in myself, and the sweet satisfaction, to see it
 “ also prevail every where still more and more.
 “ Amen.”

THE SEVENTH DECAD.

MEDITATION LXI.

Of God's holy concern in wicked men's sins.

THAT there is no unrighteousness with God; I am as sure, as I can be of any thing in the world; and whatever be the way of the Lord, thou mayest conclude, my soul, that way to be equal, even for this very reason, because it is his way; who can never do any thing amiss. When therefore, he sustains the sinning nature, and co-operates with the creatures, which do evil: it is true, that what they act, could not be done without him; yet to the obliquity, he is no way accessary. But such miscarriage arises from the abuse of that free-will, which he gives to every rational soul: nor is he only clear from all the evil, which any wicked wretches do commit, but he also turns it to that good, which they did never intend. And when he sends upon the disaffected to his truth, strong delusion, and gives offenders up to their own heart's lust; to uncleanness, and to vile affections, and a reprobate sense; or gives orders for the heart of a people to be made fat, and bids make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: it is certain, that he does nothing in all this, but what he has good reason to do. Nothing, but what he is always very just in the doing. Let him harden Pharaoh's heart, and deceive the deceived prophet, or put a lying spirit into his mouth; yet dare I not here take the boldness

ness of some, to put such another sense upon Scripture, as to deny, what the Lord so plainly has affirmed. No need of this; when as none can ever fasten the blame of their wickedness upon him; nor (from any justiciary acts of his) ever frame a just defence of their sinful selves. But by man, came sin: and God, that is holy, cannot be tempted of evil; neither does he tempt any man. "*Neminem indurat, nisi merito.*" Aug.—Whenever he hardens any hearts, they well deserve it at his hands.

Yet cannot I think, that God's concern here, is never any more than a bare permission; or only, the not hindering of what he could help. For that which he permits, he voluntarily permits: not as constrained to it; and then so far, does he will, that it should be; or else it never could be. Did not he suffer it, never should we hear of it. Nor can I think, it is only like the good master's spoiling of a naughty servant; *i. e.* by being over kind and indulgent to him. Though this must be owned, a very high aggravation of wickedness: when the goodness of God, that should lead to repentance, does but add more hardness still, to the impenitent heart; yet does the Lord, where he pleases, withdraw that grace, which he is not bound to bestow; and then sin follows, even as darkness follows, upon the subtraction of light. When, alas, so false and corrupt is the heart of sinful man; that every heart would soon become, even as hard as Pharaoh's; should God but leave it, as much as he did that proud stubborn offender's. And whenever the Lord would have any wicked sinners destroyed; he need not (as indeed he cannot) infuse any sinful evil into them; but only leave them over to themselves, who then, will be sure to do it. Nor does he at all, wrong any one, in leaving them to their own free choice: much less, in taking away those helps from them, which when they had them, they did but
abuse

abuse them. Nor is he injurious to them, in proposing the objects, that should enlighten, soften, and reclaim them : which yet (through their own corruption) tend to blind and harden them, and to increase the wickedness upon them ; when they stumble at the word, and wax wanton upon the enjoyment of mercies, and grow desperate under the feeling of judgments : then light itself blinds them ; the Word of life, becomes the favour and sentence of death to them ; and that which was healing and helping in itself, proves deadly and destructive to their souls.

This is the dreadful act of God's justice, to punish sin with itself, and let the sinner fall from bad to worse, till he has filled up the measure of his wickedness. Out of which very evil, yet can God tell how to bring good, and to serve the ends of his own glory, even upon such incorrigible workers of iniquity ; and still does he continue holy, though they go all to naught, and are shut up in everlasting misery. O my soul ! tremble at his righteous judgments, stand in awe of his Omnipotent Majesty, and dare not to grow and presume even upon his richest mercy, who might, in justice, forsake thee utterly ; and then, should he so give thee up, thou wouldst be lost indeed for ever.

THE PRAYER.

“ **M**OST holy, righteous GOD ! so greatly have
 “ I sinned against thee, that I am afraid lest
 “ thou shouldest forsake me, and give me up, for
 “ my sins to prevail against me, till they bring
 “ final ruin upon me. But in judgment still re-
 “ member, I beseech thee, the mercy which thou
 “ hast ever shewed to me. O leave me not to my
 “ own heart's lust ; but pluck me, by thy powerful
 “ grace, out of every wicked way, that threatens
 “ danger

“ danger to my soul. Let not thy holy Word be
 “ to me a stumbling block ; nor any of thy deal-
 “ ing, an occasion of my falling : but turn all (in
 “ thy tender mercy) to work for my recovery
 “ and safety, and to set forward my present sancti-
 “ fication, and my eternal salvation, through Jesus
 “ Christ my Lord. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXII.

Of the sinner's justification.

AFTER that man has sinned, and lost himself ;
 O my soul, how shall he be restored, and set
 right ? By what means may he be discharged and
 acquitted of guilt ? How, freed from the curse of
 the law, and taken again into the favour of God ?
 When the justice of Heaven will have a satisfaction,
 for the violation of his righteous command, and a
 reparation of the wrong to his glorious Majesty,
 either the soul that sinneth must die itself, or else
 by such an undertaker, of whom the offended Lord
 will be pleased to allow. For no mercy will he
 shew to the damage of his justice ; and if that do
 not find a compensation, the offender must then lie
 under the condemnation. God that is perfectly
 holy, will not be put off with any expiation, but
 what shall abolish and take away transgression ; *i. e.*
 in making such amends for the offence committed ;
 as if no such thing had been acted. Now, such an
 expiation, O my soul, how can I ever make, either
 by my suffering, or by my obeying ? Let me
 suffer, it is but the desert of my sins, and not so
 much

much as that neither, for they deserve eternal sufferings. And let me obey; it is but very imperfectly, that I can do it. Yea, could I do it never so well, it would be but the payment of a debt. And what could I expect from the Lord, for but paying that which was due to him? Yet, alas, how extremely short do I fall of this; when the very utmost that ever I can offer, is as nothing, to all the vast scores, for which I am in arrears? O never let me think of, satisfying for my sins, in my own person; nor yet hope to have it done by any creature in the world, on my account. For he must not only die in my stead; who will exempt me from that death, which is the wages of my sins; but he must have an infinite power and purity, to answer all the demands of Heaven's justice, completely and exactly. And, O what righteousness, but that of God's own holy eternal Son can ever avail for such a purpose? who can do this favour, to justify me a sinner, but he alone that did no sin; and, to atone for my sins, satisfied both the precept of the law, in his unsinning obedience, and fulfilling all righteousness; and also the penalty of the law, in enduring the cross; and by dying on the infamous tree, making himself a curse? neither his obeying, nor his suffering, could be on his own account, who had no need of either for himself; not to obey, or become a man, as he was God; nor ever to die or suffer, as he was the most innocent man. Whatever then he did or endured in the flesh, it was for others sakes. And so did he supererogate in all; that the surplusage might redound to sinners souls; and that what was not needful in his own case, might answer all the sad necessities of ours.

And as the Lord, that laid on him the iniquities of us all, may (as he pleases,) accept what was performed, and undergone by the Saviour, in full payment for any sinner: so will he be pleased to accept it,

it, even for me a sinner : if I am a believer. For it is made upon all believers : and my faith entitles me to the benefit of all that he has acted and suffered. By my believing in him, there is a translation made of my sins to him ; and of his righteousness to me. For God is said to be just, in “ justifying the believers on Jesus.” Rom iii. 26. It is an act of his justice, as well as of his mercy ; to let them enjoy the full benefit of all that their blessed Surety has accomplished in their stead : and not suffer them to lie under the lash and damnation ; after he has paid the whole price of their eternal redemption. Imputation here follows, as the consequent of expiation. And they that reject the former, do even throw away both together. For what signifies the satisfaction of Christ for sins ; if it shall not be imputed to sinners ? “ Turn this key right (saith bishop Hacket in his sermons) that we are justified from our sins, by the blood-shedding of Christ ; and then all is open : but wrench the door with any other key ; as if we would pick open the lock of heaven gates, with our own sufferings and righteousness : and all then is shut.—Let us fly to the grace, which freely washes away our sins : and thus does it behove as to fulfil all righteousness—Grant us the active and passive obedience of Christ for our justification ; or else, it is not *ὁλοκαύτωμα*, a whole burnt-offering.—The righteousness of the law is described, Rom. x. 5. That the man who does those things shall live in them : but the Lord looked down from heaven, and saw no such man upon earth.—How look ye then to escape the fire of hell, when ye shall stand before the judgment seat of God ? Will ye trust to inherent righteousness, and say, it will be well for me ; such good I have done ? Or will ye trust to the imputed justice of Christ, which is true and perfect justice, that pleaseth the eyes of God ? O what ground
“ can

“ can be laid for peace and salvation, but in his righteousness, that justifies a sinner? They that carp at this, take them from their sentences and their quodlibets, and search what they say in their books of devotion, manuals of prayer, graduals of love and repentance, and meditations of death: and then nothing comes from them but, O Lord deliver us: O Saviour Redeem us: O Son of God remember not that which is past. Then they never fly to the bloody altar of the law; but to the sanctuary of the gospel. In a word, whosoever refers his justification in any part to the legal righteousness, is yet in bondage.—Fallen from grace. Gal. v. 4. and in danger to lose the benefit of a Saviour.”

Now here, my soul, when struck down, at the sad sight of thy guilt, and the dreadful apprehension of God's wrath: learn what thou hast to do. And revive, and cheer up; to see thy help laid upon one so mighty: bless the Father of mercies, for such a remedy: and never think of being justified by, anything that thou thyself art able to effect: but cast thy burden upon the Lord thy Redeemer: and having found him, hold him: and do not let him go. Yea, joy in God, having received the atonement: and evermore give him thanks, for thy justification by his free grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

THE PRAYER.

“ **F**OR ever bound am I to magnify the riches of thy grace; and the wonders of thy love, O blessed God my Saviour, to me a provoking miserable sinner. When nothing is my portion, but fearful expectation of fiery wrath and indignation; that thou shouldest make way for my free justification; and bring me full absolution, and eternal

“nal redemption. O Lord my life! thou hast
 “made me dead to the rigour of that law, which pro-
 “nounced the sentence of death upon my soul:
 “thou hast taken its curse upon thyself; and offer-
 “ed thyself a sacrifice for my sins: to which most
 “precious oblation, I will trust, for my own justi-
 “fication; beseeching thee, the blessed author and fi-
 “nisher of our faith, to increase my faith, and wake
 “my peace; and through faith in thy blood, O let
 “me be justified, and reconciled to my God:
 “Amen.”

MEDITATION LXIII.

Of the penitent Sinner's good hopes.

THE confidence that dwells with impenitence,
 and hoping well in an ill state; is that danger-
 ous delusion, wherewith the presumptuous are used
 not only to abuse, but to undo themselves; when
 they will have it, that they shall fare as well as the
 best; though they make bold still to do even as bad
 as the worst. But this notwithstanding, yet is there
 a sound believing, that may consist with the consci-
 ence of guilt, and the incursion of divers tempta-
 tions. Nor are pious souls presently to throw a-
 way all their hopes; because they find cause still, to
 bewail their great and many sins; nor refuse to be
 comforted, till they cease to be tempted. When I
 have the good hope through grace, and find that
 blessed work, which it has wrought upon thee, my
 soul; shall I straight be out of heart and hope, to re-
 member how ill I have done, and how beset with
 temptations still I am? No, though my sins abound;

yet can I perceive that in God which is more abundant and infinite, than all my sins. The guilt, as a huge vessel of water on my head, is in itself exceeding grievous: but when poured out into the sea of his love and mercy in Christ, there it is even as nothing; and imperceptibly glides all way, till no more to be found. When it is God that justifies, who is he that condemns? and what is it, that he cannot do? Be still, and know, that I am God; saith he, Psal. xlv. q. d. Remember who I am: and then do not offer to limit the Almighty; as if that were impossible with me, which you want to be done for you. It is true, that he is infinitely holy and just; as well as powerful and good: yet are not his holiness and justice against, but for, every penitent believer. For they do engage the Lord, to be faithful and true to his own word: and he is not only "merciful, but also just, to forgive my sins; when "I confess them," 1 John i. 9. The Redeemer has brought justice and mercy together, to meet and kiss each other; in the atonement that he has made for our sins: and here is a full answer, to the utmost of Heaven's demands; that the "Lord has laid on him "the iniquity of us all: and the blood of Jesus "Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin."

My sins then cannot be so great and heinous, but there are promises of mercy and pardon, more exceeding great and precious: promises, which God has actually made good already, to many a great sinner; and which he will as certainly fulfil to every penitent believer: how stupendous and numerous soever have been his sins; the gracious God will not cast off any merely upon his account, because his sins have been great and many; for then should he take none to mercy: but the more desperate seems the disease; the more does it magnify the cure. And he will have the greater honour, in pardoning the greater sinner. After I have, then, been looking on
my

my sins, infinitely great and many, to humble thee, my soul ; I will look upon my God, infinitely great and good, to raise my hope. And the full satisfaction of Christ, with the faithful promises of God in him, shall animate my heart, and still keep up my faith. Yea, though I am yet haunted, and often worsted, with temptations : iniquities prevailing against me, and lusts and passions many times proving too hard for me : (which is the most grievous case, so to be annoyed with the body of this death ; which I know not how to get rid of :) yet it is not a singular case ; nor a desperate case. For the like complaints are made, even by the best of my brethren in the world. Yea, they that are the richest in grace, sometimes do sustain the forest assaults of temptation. And I must see better reasons than ever yet I could see ; to convince me, that St. Paul himself did not mean his regenerate self, of which he so complains ; Rom. vii. from ver. 8, to 25. And some that seem afraid to entertain such a hard thought, of one so much their better, may so, peradventure, be more tender of their own error, than of the apostle's honour. For the humble ingenuous confession, is no ruin, or loss of reputation. No : I shall despair of their finding me any better men in the world ; than such as use to speak so bad of themselves. Thus to feel the hurts of sin, and groan under the conflict with corruption ; is rather indeed a proof of a tender heart, than any argument of a graceless state. And I cannot think ever the higher of their condition ; who stand so much clearer in their own opinion. But though I must freely acknowledge myself one of those ; who cannot do the things that I would, and so often do the evil, which I would not ; yet here to grow desperate upon the matter will not make it ever the better ; but rather dishonour my God, and plunge my soul further into the mire ; instead of advancing towards any recovery. Nor am I. to suspend

pend my faith, all the mean time, till I have obtained the conquest: no, but I must believe; that so I may become victorious. For when deadly sores are running upon me; how am I like to be healed, without making my application to the physician? And when I see the extreme need of a Saviour, it is not then to fly from him; but get the nearer to him: and so take hold of him, that I may find my help in him. Perceiving, that I can make nothing of it myself; the more need have I then by faith, to fetch in his strength. And though I am to beware, that my faith hinder not any of my endeavours; yet must I be as careful, that no endeavouring jumble out my believing. But still let me look unto Jesus; and believe in hope, even against hope: that where no works of righteousness, which I have done, or can do, will avail to give me rest; yet being justified by faith, I may have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE PRAYER.

“**M**Y sins give a check to my faith; and are enough to ruin all my hopes; but thy mercies and promises in Christ Jesus, O gracious God, revive my heart, and bear me up from sinking into despair. O let thy tender compassion, and his meritorious propitiation, ease my soul of the insupportable load and oppression. Iniquities prevail against me, O Lord! As for my transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. I believe, Lord, help my unbelief: and give me such a faith, as shall give me the victory over my fears, and my sins; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXIV.

Of good works.

O My soul! may not I make it a question, whether any such things as good works, are to be found among sinful men in this present evil world? Sure it must be only in the common estimate of favourable judges; and in the gracious acceptance of a merciful God, through Christ; that ever the best of our works can pass for good, as proceeding from the true principle of his grace, and directed to the right end of his glory. For, O what good can we do, that carries no tincture of evil? and how can the performances attended with so many defects, answer the demands of God's most perfect laws? They must be then, only such good works, as frail creatures in this peccable state, are capable of: such fruits as can be produced by the trees, that are only in part renewed.

And these works, to which we may attain, are they only the pouring out money upon the uses of charity; giving alms, to relieve the poor's necessities, or chastising our own bodies, as well as refreshing the bowels of others? These, how laudable soever, yet must not engross to themselves all the honour: but works of righteousness, and godliness, devotion, and zeal for pure religion; doing good to our own souls; and all the good that lies in us, also to the souls of others; these are works (for goodness) not to be postponed to any austerities on the body; or any communications, in the way of mercy or liberality.

And

And be the works of which sort soever, I must not therefore despise them, because merit-mongers idolize them. But, though I dare not trust to them; yet must I be zealous of them: and never reckon to convince adversaries so well, by professing fairer, or talking faster; as by living holier, and doing better. Yea, I must be careful to maintain good works, in order to my own salvation, as well as for others conviction: Because I shall be judged by them; and should be presumptuous, to reckon upon salvation, without them, when the very faith that saves me, must be shewed by the works that are performed by me. Yea, am not I created in Christ Jesus to good works? And the truth of my title to him; how is it to be cleared, but by them? They give me then a sweet refreshment on the way; and O to what pleasures unknown, will they bring me at the end! how do they oblige the world; and make many beholden to me! And what justice do they, to the truth and faith professed by me? And even constrain all about me, to entertain a worthy opinion of that religion, which they see so productive of good fruits, in my conversation?

Though I cannot, then, do all the good that I would! yet must I be set upon it, to do all the good that I can: it being still more serviceable to God, and more profitable to men; and so helping to wipe off the aspersion, cast by some, upon the Christian profession, that it teaches men so to cry up free grace as to throw down good works, and to lay so much upon believing as to make light of doing. Whereas our Lord calls us, not only to believe more, but also to do more than others; yea, to make our faith evident in our life. And though I will never set up any works in the place of Christ; nor hope to be justified or saved by any thing that I have attempted or performed; but have another office, needful for my works; *i. e.* To make me a follower
of

of my Lord, in the holy way, where he has gone before me, and which he has prescribed to me; so to fit me for him, and render me meet to live for ever with him: (where then I dare not elevate the works above their proper spheres, to jostle out my Saviour, or to go before him or sit equal with him; but would make them follow after as humble servants, and come behind him, and still be dutiful attendants upon him) yet I hope, I shall never shut them out, nor think it time to leave them off; nor count it enough to know and approve, or mean, the good, without applying myself to do it; nor content myself to do no harm, without doing good, in my generation; when this I know to be the stage of action, and now, my working time; yea, that I can never do enough for him, who has done the greatest things for me. O that I may get such a habit of well doing, that instead of being weary of it, I may be weary of myself, when not upon it. And may this give me the mighty encouragement to it, that the time is so short, till I shall rest from all my labours, and my works shall follow me; and the better I do here, the better shall I fare for ever. Tho' not for my work's sake, yet for his word's sake, who has promised not to forget the least labour of love, that is well designed for his service, in the name of his Son.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD! I am ashamed, to think how much
 “ more has been my evil, than my good:
 “ how little I have done, that (with any favourable
 “ allowance) could be called good; and how much
 “ less of real goodness has been even in that, which
 “ was so reputed. The best of my works being so
 “ full of blemishes and defects, that after all I have
 “ done, I am not only an unprofitable servant, un-
 “ worthy

“worthy to be rewarded, but a great sinner, deserving to be condemned. O Lord, forgive, not only my foul offences, but even my best performances. For without thy mercy, nothing remains for me but misery; no heaven, for any thing that I have done, but only on the account of that, which my Lord Redeemer has done. Yet, that I may be a follower of him, who went about doing good. O thou that workest in us, to will and to do, plant in me the holy root, that shall bring forth much fruit, and make me ready to, and able for, the performance of every good work; and work in me, O gracious God, that which is well pleasing in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXV.

Of the wisdom of well-doing.

IT is a part of the wicked man's character, Psal. xxxvi. 3. That “he has left off to be wise, and to do good.” However he may count himself a politic, understanding man; to be such a master of the knavish art, that he knows how to juggle and equivocate; to circumvent another, and prove too hard for his unwary neighbour: herein, alas, how does he gull himself, and put the worst cheat upon his own soul! while he madly rushes on, after the impetus of his wild passions, and his brutish affections; and would not be thought to err in the least, or to have done any thing wrong, how extremely is he out? His judgment is corrupt, and he has no knowledge to do himself any good. No, when he has once parted with honesty and piety, he has lost all rational discerning and good understanding.

standing. Cunning he may be, and witty; but never can he be wise and judicious, that is ungodly. For all true wisdom is seen in well-doing; and, by godly living, to provide, beyond this life, for that which is incomparably better: to look most of all, to that which is the main; and to be in the greatest care, for what must evermore endure.

I cannot be ignorant, that the wicked and worldly do commonly pass here, for the most subtle and witty. To get all that ever they can, even by any means: and when they have got it, to hold fast, what they call their own: this they reckon their penetration, and the chiefest point of discretion. But him they call the silly precisian, that will despise all, for Christ Jesus; and count godliness the greatest gain, and God's favour the richest treasure. Nothing, with them, deserves the name of wisdom, that contributes not, either to please the flesh, or to fill the purse. Understanding in the way of godliness, is to such, no better than mopingness, and religion a dull, silly thing; which they throw by, as an impertinent exercise, that does but interrupt and hinder, their best beloved and most esteemed business. But after all this confident decision, in their own favour; yet how soon will they be taught to compute after a new manner? And when they come to see their gross mistake, and their undoing folly, wish too late, that they had been wiser, and well considered it sooner?

O my soul! to be wise indeed, I must set myself to do good; and be all for it, and never cease from it, as long as I am capable of it. Let me not so covet then, to have a great deal of the worldly good, as to do a great deal of the holy good; being well persuaded of this, that it is not the good which I have; but the good which I do, that will shew me to be wise now, and bring me to be happy for ever.

Then does a man well bethink himself indeed ; when he understands and pursues the work, for which God lent him his time here in the world. Then does he set up for a wise man, when he begins to be a godly man. And let who will censure him, as much may he despise their judgment, as they can deride his choice.

However any else do think or act ; let me, my soul, attend God's Word ; and give myself to it, even day and night, to meditate in it. Let me be much in prayer ; often at it, and make my chief business of it. Let me be open-handed, to relieve poor bodies on earth, and open-hearted also, to help my neighbours souls towards heaven. Let me do all that I can for all ; and love it, and delight in it, and never be weary of it, but all upon it : as knowing, that the more I sow, and the better I do here ; the more I shall reap, and the better I shall fare for ever. Thus devoting myself to do good ; and so continuing in well-doing : I shall be both wise, and also rich toward God ; wise in the right choice ; and rich in good works. And being now rich in them ; I shall hereafter be much more rich, in the glorious everlasting rewards promised to them.

T H E P R A Y E R.

“ **G**IVE me that heavenly wisdom, O my GOD,
 “ which may quicken and engage me, to lay
 “ out and spend myself, in doing good. Help me
 “ to abound in thy work, and make me ready to
 “ every good work. While I have opportunity,
 “ O let me do all the good that is within the reach
 “ of my ability ; good, to my own soul ; and good,
 “ to the souls and bodies of others. And by my
 “ fruitfulness in good works, may I give proof of
 “ my wisdom now ; and also lay up in store a good
 “ foundation

“ foundation against the time to come. That after
“ I have shewed my faith by my works; and
“ fought for glory, honour, and immortality, by
“ patient continuance in well-doing; I may find
“ the blessed end to be eternal life, and the un-
“ speakable joy of my Lord. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXVI.

Of the shame that attends a wicked man.

O My soul! if the wicked be lothsome; not only in the judgment of God's Word, that brands them for fools and brutes; and resembles them to dross and dirt and dung; but the suffrage also even of common nature, that discovers such a moral turpitude in works of wickedness, as can no more be separated from them, than I can part the black hue from the Ethiopian's skin; how haps it then, that ill men do pass so well, and keep up a tolerable reputation in the world? Nay, that some of them are followed and observed, esteemed and courted, more than better men; and make the figure here, to draw such regard, as who but they? This, peradventure, may be but the customary complement of a false world, giving them a cap or a knee, or a title, without any real honour so conveyed; and some that hug them in their arms, cannot forbear to despise them in their hearts; or else by hard shift, for a while, such as are obnoxious, may suspend the deserved confusion, and buoy up a sinking reputation, either by the art of palliation and concealment, to cover the matter with denials or extenuations, with a cheating disguise or a stout impudence;

impudence ; or by the favour of fortune in their worldly sufficiency, which is so much admired by many, that they are ready to adore the ass, which carries the rich lading; and look upon him that is got up some golden stairs, as hoisted above all contempt, Let the saucy populace then clatter ; yet they flatter themselves, as beyond the reach of shame and penalty ; when they have but sinned themselves great, and wealthy. Honourable posts can adorn base follies, and great mens purses compound for their mis-carriages. Yea, the wedge of gold shall cleave even the knots of the laws. (Bp. H.) And such beasts, flying to their den, there find defence in their pelf. And who shall see any blemish in those that are so gilded over ? Or by their kindness and some plausible carriage, they make a party of such spokesmen as shall take off what the rest do lay upon them. And thus their case's necessity may put them, not only upon affability, but liberality : to carry sweet, and also be at cost, to stop the mouths of some, and hire the tongues of others. He is noble to them ; he makes much of them ; and then, he is a good man ; who dare say any thing against him ? They will bring him off ; yea, and even fight for him. Thus the wicked, like cunning fencers, use all their flight and dexterity, to ward off from them, the shame that belongs to them.

But after all the evasions and protractions, it will yet come home : and nature so jostled out, will take its own place again. That which is shameful, shall once shew its own ugly face ; and their iniquity, who never so much flatter themselves in their own eyes, will be found to be hateful. Let it creep in corners, or brisk up itself in spight of accusers ; it shall yet be dragged forth, and put to confusion. The shame which they escape at present, they shall be sure to have it all at last. And the worst of all will be the contempt and scorn cast upon them by
their

their eternal Judge, in open sight of all the world : when he shall bid them, " Depart from me ; I know " you not : " which some take for a cutting reprimand, of their cavilling humour ; that cry, " Lord, " when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a " stranger, or naked, or sick, or imprisoned ; and did not minister to thee ? " After he has so reprimanded them complaining ; as if he mistook them, to be worse than they were ; and justifying themselves to the very last : then he tells them, " I know " you not," *q. d.* Be you better than I take you for ; yet that notwithstanding (as good as you are) " Depart, ye cursed." And, O what so confounding and stabbing ; as to take such a final leave of the great God, and be packed away into everlasting fire ; not only without any compassion, but with such opprobrium and derision.

O my soul ! what will it avail any men, to rub on here a little while, with some sorry esteem, extorted from their neighbours ; and in the end, to be detected, and exposed, and turned off, as filthy refuse stuff ; fit only to be swept away into the pit of hell ! Let the wicked now set up, to credit their vices and villanies ; and (as the devil's proctors) put a fair gloss, even upon the foulest matters, and coach away impiety, and debauchery, in triumphant equipage : this unnatural force will not last long : but there shall be an end to the scandalous trade, so to blanch, and paint over, nasty abominations ; and of that impossible task, to rub up dirt and dung, to make it clean. After all this, wickedness will yet come to look itself, even in the biggest men, and the most numerous crowds, that are now for shouldering it up ; even as their Diana, to be worshipped. Down it shall, though in fashion as yet ; and the patrons and abettors (for all their magnitude, and their multitude ;) shall be laid as low as ever they were high ; and come to shame and everlasting contempt.

THE PRAYER.

“ **H**ELP me, LORD, so to take shame to
 “ myself, for my sins, that thou mayest have
 “ compassion on my soul, and save me from the
 “ future shame. O let me be so abased before thee,
 “ in penitent humiliation, that thou mayest not
 “ cast me from thee, nor put me to everlasting con-
 “ fusion. Open the eyes of wicked men, to see
 “ their own nakedness and shame; and fill their
 “ faces with shame, that they may seek thy name,
 “ O Lord. Yea, fill the hearts of thy servants
 “ with courage, to despise the prosperity of the wic-
 “ ked, and to withstand the insolence and contempt
 “ of proud sinners. O that we may so godly order
 “ our conversation in the world, that we may have
 “ confidence towards God; and find, not only
 “ mercy, but glory, in the great day of the Lord.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION LXVII.

Of abhorring evil.

THE evil of suffering, is an evil that we need
 not to be dissuaded from loving; where our
 very nature has furnished us with antipathy, and
 such reluctance as carnal nice men run to so foul
 excess; that they will do nothing brave or worthy,
 for fear of the appendant trouble and difficulty. No
 mortification of lust, no warfare against the soul's
 foes, that they can abide: nothing will down with
 them; but what is soft and sweet, to humour and
 please

please them. And O how many do here throw themselves upon the very shame and sorrow, which their nature most abhors: by cleaving still to their sins, those cursed things that carry infamy and misery, hell and damnation, at their heels!

That moral evil of sin, which some can hug and play with, as a fine harmless thing; and others would even dispute it away, for a fancy, a name, and nullity: O my soul, that is the deadly plague, which breeds all the hurt and mischief here; and brings all the judgments and torments to be endured for ever. Against this sinful abomination must I therefore, raise and level all my spight and detestation: not only sometimes forbearing it, when still too well I love it; taking so deep a displeasure at it, as utterly to fall out with it, and never be reconciled to it; and making known this my aversion, both in speech and action; never thinking I can say bad enough of it; never mocking at it, nor dropping a gentle word in favour of it. Standing off from tampering and meddling with the temptations, tendencies and introductions to it; not taking any pleasure in the evil-doers, nor bearing with them; but full of vexation and indignation against them (while others of the same temper incline to them, and plead for them; and the worse they are, the better do like them) being uneasy by them, and longing for a good deliverance from them; and laying my designs quite contrary to them, even for pulling down that which they strive to set up; bending all my endeavours to expirate what I so abominate, to destroy and ruin the hateful thing, all that ever I am able, both in myself and others. For it is not only to give out words, and rally at it, but to have my heart within me rise against it. And then do I most effectually express the hatred, when I lend my helping hand to beat down and suppress it. And to prove that my rancour

cour is not against persons but vices, I must not indulge but prosecute also my own. Yea, and be sharper upon the sin at home, which threatens me with greater danger than any from abroad. It is not to cry, I hate what is base; and boast, that I would not do an ill thing, when I have too glib a swallow for some allowed iniquity, and while I will not suffer the tares to grow till harvest, nor offenders even to subsist in the world, I can yet give such evils as I inveigh against in them, fair quarter in my own bosom, as if I would engross the monopoly to myself.

O let me not mistake such shameful partiality, for the hatred of iniquity. For never can I so think to ingratiate myself with the holy God, to whom all sin is eternally odious wherever he finds it, and no less in me than in any else. I do but play the hypocrite with him, and neither fear him nor love him, if I do not indeed hate the evil which is perfectly hated by him. Nay, how false am I to thee, my own soul, if I do not strike at the serpent in my bosom, but can harbour (as my darling) the deadly foe that seeks thy ruin! Till I come to a downright enmity against it, how can I ever be safe from it? When love is the very life of sin; and as long as I am favourable to it, I am in danger of it, that it will grow upon me to undo me.

Here then, my soul, is the only laudable vengeance, which I may make bold to execute; yea, I must do it, to rescue thee out of the worst hands, that I may not connive at the murderers which are haling thee to thy ruin. If I regard iniquity in my heart, I am a wicked traitor to myself, and stark naught, because I have not truth in the inward parts, and do but feign a displeasure against the wickedness for which I have too great a kindness. Nay, when (upon some restraints) I forbear the evil which I love, I am worse than when (through
some

some temptations) I do the evil which I hate. For this was done by one much my better, Rom. vii. 15. who fought heartily against the enemy, which yet he often found too hard for him. But he that is not against it, is for it. And then is he rotten at the root; and being false in heart, he gives up the fort, and needs must fall by the hands of his foes, whom he so invites. And how vain is it then, to talk of hating this and the other evil, as he hates the devil: when his indignation and rallying, alas, is only at the ill name, and a hard word: for the devil's nature he is of; and the devil's works he likes well enough: and, as a tempter, admits and welcomes him; and is upon as fair terms as can be, with him. O this, is the utter undoing of wicked men, by their own free consent. And how does this strengthen the wickedness of the world, that among the many who complain of it, there are so few (in their hearts) against it! Some could wish it were otherwise; but O where are they, that indeed abhor the evil! the most are parties, greedy and keen upon it; and cannot find in their hearts, to break with it: rather do abhor to be parted from it: or else, healers that are well enough contented so to have it; and trouble not their heads, at the reigning of sin, and abounding of iniquity? And then what is all their pretended Christianity; but a piece of pageantry, and mere formality; when within, they are full of all uncleanness; and their inward parts are very wickedness.

Now, if I cannot approve my heart to the searcher of hearts; unless I do abhor, as well as forbear the evil, to which my corrupt nature is so prone: O what watchfulness then, and care, and diligence, have I need to use; that I be not here betrayed, and lost, through the deceitfulness of sin; but may preserve my integrity before his eyes, who sees in

Secret; and secure myself from the destruction, which ~~will be~~ the portion of all, that did not hate the wicked abomination? O let me dread to have any familiarity with the cursed things; whose hands take hold of hell. Let me there see the devil's paw, and bid, "Get thee behind me, Satan." As I abhor hell itself; so let me abhor the sin that made it, and would throw me upon it; and in fleeing now from the sinful evil, I shall also flee from the wrath to come, which is the worst of all evils.

THE PRAYER.

"**B**LESSED GOD, glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes, than to behold any iniquity, without an extreme antipathy; thou that hatest all the works of darkness, and canst not love the unclean souls, that love their hateful sins: O turn my heart against my sins, and make me to abhor that which is evil; and so to hate every false way, that I may never regard iniquity in my heart, but take an everlasting displeasure at it, and keep up an implacable indignation against it; and flee from sin, even as from the face of a serpent: so to provide for the safety of my soul, and my good acceptance in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

MEDITATION LXVIII.

Of the temptations arising from solitude.

MY soul! I have considered already, thy damages, by frequenting of company; and, O that I could say, thou wert out of danger, when out of society! but, alas, where can I so get by myself, as to get beyond the reach of temptations; which are the ubiquitaries, laid even all over this world? Though some places do more abound with them; yet what place here is clear from them? where can I be quiet for them; but they will follow and hunt me, even in my retirement, out of the crowd, and sequestration from all manner of persons? Let me be alone, abroad in a desert, or at home by myself, got into my chamber, or shut up in my closet; can I keep off, or stop out the subtle serpent; but he will insinuate and wind in himself, and make me too sensible of his presence? Alas, my soul, how often do I find too much company in the very midst of all my solitude! vain thoughts rising up in my mind; foolish and filthy desires fermenting in my heart! O what groves can shade me, what caves can hide me from them? What hills can mount me above them? What walls, or bars of wood or stone, brass, or iron, can defend me against them? But when got alone; there am I in danger, from the want, both of helpers and beholders; as left to shift for myself, by my own single strength; and having none to impart my mind to, none to advise with, none to receive any counsel or relief

relief from. Upon which account the wise man pronounced, "Woe to him that is alone;" as having none to help him up, when he falls, Ecclef. iv. 10. No companion of his way, no partner of his conversation, to lend a hand, to give him succour, or do him any kindness; no friend, to drop a word in season; no united forces, to repel the enemies onsets. Though some (it is too true) may be near me; and it be never the better for me, when they can see me assaulted and endangered, without caring for my soul, or stirring to minister any the least help; but I may sink and perish, all surrounded with them; and none of my seeming friends, offer ever a specimen of real friendship; (which is that wretched abuse of conversation, that renders it impertinent to all its best and greatest purposes;) yet some advantage may I gather from them, even without their consent: *i. e.* from their very presence with me, and my sense of their eyes upon me. For company lays on us that restraint, which the want of witnesses takes off. And when nobody is with us, we are apt to count ourselves at liberty to do what pleases us. So that every one is said to be a god or devil to himself, when he is by himself. For, as holy souls are never less alone, than when alone; (finding the blessed correspondence above, when discharged from the cumber of other company in the world:) so can the strangers to heaven, that are out with God, no longer be decent and good for any thing, than when inspected and their spies about them, to make them a little more cautious how things are carried by them.

Here then, my soul, is the opportunity, to shew thy sincerity, that I am no hypocrite, but faithful in the covenant of my God; when I do narrowly look to my behaviour in private, and am as much in care to resist the devil, and keep myself from my iniquity, when I am only under the eye of him that sees

fees in secret, as if all the eyes of all men were upon me. This will fill my heart with such consolation, as the world cannot give me, when I dare not do wickedly, even in my closest privacy; and have as much concern there for my duty, as if I were in never so much company; yea, better alone, than where others are by, to interrupt me. When I carry within me, a conscience to rule me, as well as corruption to tempt me; and so mind the presence of God, as to withstand all that is offensive in his sight: then shall I also carry a continual comforter in my own bosom; and find the peace of God with me, and the hope of his glory rest upon me. O then, let me keep for ever upon my guard, to watch the fly serpent that lurks in secret places, and not think myself at liberty when no one is nigh me; but when freed from the molestation of troublesome conversation, may I make advantage of my solitary seasons, the better to do my soul's business, and reckon it a happy riddance to quit the company of vain men, that I may find opportunity to enjoy the blessed communion with my God.

THE PRAYER.

“**O** LORD! thou art every where present, and
 “to no place in the world can I convey myself
 “out of thy sight. O make me duly sensible of thy
 “continual presence with me, that I may never
 “grow forgetful of thy eye upon me, nor a de-
 “spiser of the glorious Majesty still over me; but
 “make me as careful of my conduct, in secret, as
 “before the world. Yea, give me grace, to im-
 “prove the opportunities of my retirement, the
 “better to know myself, and to settle the great
 “affairs of my soul, and promote the happy attain-
 “ment of my eternal salvation, and to get still fur-
 “ther and closer fellowship with my God, and my
 “Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.”

THE

MEDITATION LXIX.

Of the necessary singularity.

AS God hath been pleased, to make me a creature fit for society, so do I incline to keep up conversation with the companies, where his providence disposes of me. And though I cannot think it my duty or safety always to follow; yet I find an uneasiness to stand out and stay behind, where I see almost all go before me. For I would be all things to all, as far as I might not be offensive to him that is above them all; and would not out-run society, nor renounce every thing that is in practice even among the ungodly; when as the very children of light may learn many points of wisdom from the children of this world. It were too scrupulous and fantastical to distinguish myself from the generality in transacting the common affairs of life; where the Christian need not scorn that rule of an ethnic philosopher (*Intus omnia sint dissimilia; foris nostra populo conveniat:*) to have an inside different from the people, and the outward garb and port conformable to them. But, yet, my soul, where I am not for thwarting and jarring with them, I must, notwithstanding, take care to secure myself, and not think I am obliged in civility there to tarry, where I am in danger to miscarry. No need sure of such excessive respect to them as to venture on and perish with them. Be they never so many, none of their numbers will legitimate any of their disorders. And be they never so merry, I should make a sorry bargain to be jested into

into misery, and could not like such complaisance to be undone in courtesy. For, however, the partnership, in what is bad, may now take off the dread, yet can it neither justify the bold sinning, nor supersede the heavy reckoning. But the mighty throng, which makes them so confident they are right, may more awaken my suspicion that they are out. For what is contrary to the multitude, proves commonly nearest to the truth. And that monster of many heads, having never the more sense, but the less order: it is ill following such in their humour, who will come to condemn themselves as soon as the mad fit is over.

The church of Christ is (Ἐκκλησία) called aside, and picked out of the world; and there is a separation and non-conformity, that is approved and commanded by the Lord, Rom. xii. 2. Therefore must I not so much regard what the many do, as what the great God enjoins to be done. For I know that their tongues, even of course, will censure such, whose lives condemn theirs; and somewhat still they will have to say against those that will not do like themselves, (They are stiff and proud, supercilious and factious, pedantic and peevish.) Here then, my soul, must I look for my share, and not think much to bear the imputation of morose humour, or bad nature, and to hear, rude and ill-bred, in stemming the tide of any prevailing mode; yea, to abide a sling also at my holy religion, as against all good reason, for confronting the old approved usage of the world. A silly fool, and good for nothing! that will not let go all his wisdom and goodness, to strike in with their wild caprice, who throw dirt at all, that are for keeping themselves clean. These are the common butts, as well as gazing-stocks, of the worldly and wicked tribe. David was a proverb and a wonder to many. Lot, that shone as a bright
star

star in a dark night ; what but the spight, even of all about him ?

Yet be it so, my soul ; what matter, who looks awry at heaven's favourites ; when God, and all the blessed above, look down with as much contempt upon all the despisers ; that insult his little flock ? O how sorrowfully will they be undeceived, in such as they upbraid now, with their singularity ; when they shall see them also singular in heaven's glory ; to go in, and sit down in that blessed kingdom ; and themselves thrust out ; and sent away, condemned with the world ; to the common destruction, of such as lay together in the common pollution ! Have not I much more cause, my soul, to wonder, that they should offer to run such risques ; than they to think it strange ; that I run not with them ? They must excuse me, if I dare not take their latitudes, and lengths ; nor go and tempt such danger ; lest I pay most dear for that adventure. I will oblige the men of the world, as far as I can keep unspotted from it : I will not be rigorous to their common infirmities : nor yet must I easily indulge to their foul enormities. I will go so far in their way ; as to fetch them, (if I can,) into a better : but must not lose myself ; to reduce them. No : where I cannot heal them ; my care must be that they infect not me. And where I am not so reserved, as justly to offend them ; yet shall I not be so intimate, as to give them opportunity to ruin me. Thus must I be fain to keep up, though I am not to effect, a singularity. Yet so will I carry the singularity, that it shall never destroy my charity ; nor evacuate any due offices of humanity.

THE PRAYER.

“ **H**OLY. GOD! who callest thy people to come
 “ out, and be separate from this idolatrous
 “ world, that goes a-whoring from the Lord: O
 “ let me not confer with flesh and blood, but
 “ hearken to the monitions of thy word; and pro-
 “ vide better for the purity and safety of my soul,
 “ than to follow the multitude, and have fellowship
 “ with the unfruitful works of darkness. O make
 “ me a follower of good men, as they are of my
 “ Lord; and help me to do wicked men good,
 “ without partaking of their evil. Let it be a small
 “ thing with me, to be judged of their judgment,
 “ so that I can approve myself to the Lord, and
 “ find favour with my eternal Judge. Preserve me
 “ by thy grace, both from taking undue licence;
 “ and also from giving just offence. O be thou
 “ my God and guide, to keep me safe in such a
 “ dangerous world; unspotted from it, and in the
 “ right way leading to that better, holy, glorious
 “ place; where I shall be past all peril, secure and
 “ happy for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXX.

Of the justifiable variance.

DOES it not startle thee, my soul, to hear my
 Lord (the Lord of love) declare, That he
 “ came not to send peace on earth; but a sword;
 “ and fire and division?” To set even near rela-
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tions asunder; and the very members of a family, one against another? Is not he the Prince of peace, that came to take up the widest differences in the world? And to reconcile the most distant parties: to make wolf and leopard forget their enmity with the lamb, and the kid? Yea, so to mediate between God and man, that were at extreme odds; as to turn some of the bitterest enemies, into the dearly beloved of his soul? And what does he more charge his disciples, than to love one another? Yea, to love their very enemies; and where they have any adversary, to agree with him quickly? And must they that are bound to follow peace with all men, offer then to fall out, and contend with any man? Yes, they must fall out even with their sinful selves, and abhor their own souls, till converted from their sins. And though they must strive with no man without cause; nor quarrel with any, for not using their very methods, when they may be faithfully designing and pursuing the same good and holy ends; yet will they transgress their duty, if they will have no contest with the ungodly. For, "they that forsake the law, praise the wicked; but such as keep the law, contend with them," Prov. xxviii. 4. Their manners are not to be endured. And by whom they be not discountenanced and reprov'd, they are abett'd and allowed. O who can keep the conscience void of offence towards God, that is not offended at such men? He that is not with our Lord, is against him. And if I am with them, how can I be for him? What peace between the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent? And where I must not destroy the brood; yet sure, I am not bound to take them into my bosom. Though I desire the salvation, even of Christ's enemies; yet cannot I carry towards the enemies of his cross, all one as to the members of his body. And how are the servants of God and mammon like to hit it off, better than
their

their irreconcilable masters? "What concord has Christ with Belial? and what part has he that believeth with an infidel?" 2 Cor. vi. 15. Contrary tempers and manners can never so fall in and unite, but there will be offences on both sides. And as wicked sinners are so often grievous and offensive to the generation of God's children; so does he, sure, but counterfeited to be good, that will never offend the bad: when true goodness itself, is as dust in the eyes of some, because their eyes are evil. And even the Holy One of God himself, was a rock of offence to many, though he gave no offence to any. But the nearer to God, at the greater distance from ungodly men. And indeed, where we would not strengthen their hands, we must be fain to stick as thorns in their sides. For as long as they meet with no opponent, how apt are they to grow rampant?

Here then, my soul, I am even necessitated, to be a man of contention. For how can I approve myself Christ's faithful soldier, where I give no check to such as I see making head against my Lord? Though never must I pursue vengeance under the notion of justice, nor inveigh against the sin, when the man is all my grievance; nor, in compelling out-liers to come in, take up carnal weapons; to use any force, except that of argument and persuasion: for the flaming sword, that kept man out of paradise, is not to drive him into heaven. The gospel draws no sword of violence designedly; however it prove so to be drawn eventually; and it does occasion clashings and breaches abroad in the world; yea, among old friends, and such as were the kindest neighbours; when opposite causes are espoused, and the gospel-truth and holiness are assaulted. I must not then have patience with bold heresy, or open impiety, and foul iniquity. When "they chose new gods; then was war in the gates,"

Judges

Judges v. 8. Time, then, and good reason, to stand up for God's glory, against such as go to set up their idolatry; and earnestly to contend for the faith of Christ, with such as are for running it down; and draw the sword of the Spirit (as to stab our own lusts; so) to stop sinners, when madly posting to hell. Even he that was called the friend of sinners, yet would never spare their sins. And here the Captain of our salvation calls all his to arms; where connivance and lenity is a traiterous conspiracy; and, indeed, a bloody severity; not only betraying of our trustiness to our Lord, but helping to murder our neighbours souls. Here must we set fire under their pots, who are settled on their lees: and not cry, all is well; till all is like to be lost. Though they complain of us for breaking the peace, who have no other notion of peace but the wicked's prosperity and carnal security, to enjoy the world and their lusts without disturbance, or any to trouble them: reformers (like Elias) should be rough hairy men; not regarding what such do think, who, in their thoughts, are so extremely wide of the truth. Ill men want to be affrighted, that are not like to be complimented out of their sins. And some here, had need to sell their garments, and the cloaks, wherewith they use to cover wickedness, and buy the sword of reproof; though it may cost them so dear as their own quiet, and their neighbours good will; that they may not pull down more sins, than their own, upon their heads, but wash their hands of others guilt, and signalize the truth of their friendship, by that best of all kindness in the world, to recover their neighbours out of the snare of the devil, who have been taken captive by him at his will.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD! I am thy servant: make me, I
“ beseech Thee, a wise and faithful servant;
“ faithful, to thy holy interests; and wise, to deal
“ with thy wicked enemies; so to come about
“ them, as to do good of them: and not, by any
“ wrong methods, lose myself, in seeking to gain
“ them; nor blemish thy truth, in setting them
“ right. It is a case of difficulty, to appear for thy
“ glory; and come off successfully, and innocently;
“ to convince and persuade, such as oppose them-
“ selves; and not be lashed by my own mind; for
“ offending thee, in correcting the offences of others.
“ O my Lord! teach and help me, here to acquit
“ myself; so that I may be thy instrument, to do
“ good in the world; and also enjoy peace in my
“ breast, with thee my God. Amen.”

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THE EIGHTH DECAD.

MEDITATION LXXI.

Of the Day of Grace.

O My soul ! I must not be in care, only to bear good fruits, but also to bring them forth in good time ; because the time is so short, and my day will so soon be gone ; and the things belonging to my peace, after a little while, be hid from my eyes. Every one that is godly shall pray to the “ Lord, in a time when he may be found,” Psal. xxxii. 6. For a time there is, when men shall call, and he will not answer ; yea, seek him early, but not find him. The day of grace, like other days, will have an end, and the space to repent will be over. The bridegroom will be gone in, and the door shut ; and the Lord, that with much long-suffering endured the vessels of wrath, will at last come to visit them in judgment. And then the calls and cries, which might have done much with him before, shall avail nothing at all.

But that thou mayest not hence make any desperate conclusion, my soul, as if the time were past, and it were too late for thee now to work out thy salvation ; do not mistake this day of grace, for some fatal period, or critical moment of my life ; which when once slipped by, there is no further hope for me. For though it be true, that the time of a
people’s

people's visitation may be expired, and their candlestick removed, and they so unchurched, as to be deprived of the ordinary public means of salvation; yet is there no pronouncing the day of grace past to any person, who continues under the call of the gospel, and has any desire to come in at that call; yea, though a man has refused those gracious invitations, the very like to which he may never have again; yet, if by any means, upon any occasion of his life, he shall be brought again to a hearty willingness, to come unto Christ, and receive him on his terms, and follow him in his ways; that is the accepted time then, and the day of salvation, with him: and be it never so late, yet shall he in no wise be cast off; nor shall any of his former delays and neglects be imputed to him, so as to spoil and ruin him. Though he is brought to it by age or sickness, or sad accidents; however it be, I am not he that dare so limit the mercies of God, as to tell just how often he will pardon, how long he will bear, and in what circumstances he will refuse to be gracious, and be favourable no more.

But should the doom be gone out upon any man living, that there is no place of repentance to be found by him, no hope of recovery for him: (which is more than I will, or can, determine of any man upon earth; yet) then is it to be supposed, that such a giving up, would leave the man under that obduracy in his sins, that he would be unconcerned for his wretched state, and not trouble his head about the matter. When, therefore, I do tremble for fear, lest God's patience should be at an end with me; and bewail my sins and my loss of time, and wish that I could recal what is past, and live over my life again, to correct the former errors: this I may take for a comfortable encouragement to me, that the day of grace is not yet past with me. Yea, when it is said, Now is the accepted

cepted time : — I cannot understand it, to be meant only of the present day, or hour, that is upon me ; but of the gospel-time, and my life-time : even as long as I live under the means of grace, that is to me a day of grace. And how vile soever I have been, how long soever I have stood out, how much soever I have offended ; yet the calls of God are after me, and the proposals of Christ, and life and salvation by him, are offered to me ; and coming to him, even after so long a time of holding off, yet he will not cast me off.

But though I believe this day of grace, to bear date even with the last day of my life ; yet, O my soul, what a handbreadth is that day ? And how soon will it go out into a long, long night, and never such a day shine upon me any more ! and while I am delaying, and resting in some good purposes, what I mean to do for the future : O how surprizingly may death come upon me ; and, indeed, put an utter end to the day of my trial, and finish the whole of my part : so that I shall be out of all capacity, to do another stroke ? O how fleeting and transitory, is that life of mine, upon which all depends ! how frequently assaulted ? How easily puffed out ? And how quickly consumed, and past all away ? and putting off, but till another day ; I do not know, what one day may bring forth, to my eternal loss. O how many have been undone, by depending upon to-morrows ! and how would such lost souls now bestir themselves ; might they but yet again be put under my circumstances, and have such another day, or but a piece of this my day ! But they had their day which is gone, and they shall see it no more. Now, the present is my day, but after that will be the day of the Lord, that great and terrible day, which will come as a thief in the night, and fetch me hence, to answer how I have here spent my day of grace. O may the God, in whose hands

are

are my times, have all my heartiest thanks, that yet I have a day which I can call my day ; that yet it is not done with me, but prolonged to me, and hopeful opportunities set before me. And when all is well that ends well ; and here, the sweet and blessed ending, depends upon the careful and godly living : O may I take the greatest heed, how I spend every hour of my day, which is all so little to make ready for a never-ending eternity !

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND quicken, O LORD, and hasten me to
 “ do the work of him that sent me, while
 “ the day of grace is continued to me. O teach me
 “ to know the time of my visitation, and give me
 “ grace to improve (as I ought) those fair oppor-
 “ tunities which I have in my hands. Make me so
 “ careful of my whole conversation, that at last I
 “ may find a comfortable conclusion : that the end
 “ of my present life may prove the beginning of my
 “ eternal joy ; and when I must away from hence,
 “ I may depart in the peace of my God, and the
 “ hope of heaven ; and after my working-day, keep
 “ an eternal holy-day, with all the wise and faithful
 “ servants of my Lord ; among all the blessed frui-
 “ tions of thy everlasting kingdom.”

MEDITATION LXXII.

Of barrenness under the means of grace.

TO be in the church, like some sticks or stakes, stuck in the ground, without any root or life; receiving all the influences from above, but never coming on, to produce any fruit; O my soul! will this render me safe, or turn to my comfortable account? Shall I content myself, to let all the mighty concerns of my everlasting salvation lie only in books and ministers hands, and not fall to gather, and eat, and digest, the spiritual food myself? Alas, what are ordinances, but empty shells; if I do not draw and drink my soul's health, out of those wells of salvation? And how easily may I starve, even in the midst of plenty: if I will only talk of it, or look at it; and not feed upon it, to make my advantage of it? O what means of salvation can save such as despise them, and will not, in earnest, meddle with them, to get any improvement by them? Some that were favoured with the preaching and miracles of Christ himself, yet were never the better for them; and after all the privilege and seeming acquaintance, he will tell them, he never knew them. Indeed, the very means and helps will rise up against them that have them, and have no list to use and improve them; so that this barrenness is one of the forest evils, which in this world could befall them. And better to be eaten up of Egypt's vermin, pined with Samaria's famine, over-run with Job's or Lazarus's sores; yea (like those miserable children) fried in the valley of Hinnom, than

than to have such a consumption, and gangrene upon the soul; as wastes it away and gnaws it off, till it drop into the pit of hell. Other calamities may dig and prune a people to rouse them into amendment, and learn them righteousness; but this neglect and withering, under heavenly dispensations, puts a full stop to all that looks hopeful upon the soul. It cuts off all the excuses of careless sinners; and no ignorance then can they plead, but what will aggravate their guilt; because they did not want the light, but turned from it, and shut their eyes against it. Nor will the plea of frailty avail them; because they did cast contempt upon the helps offered them, and were wilfully wicked; yea, hated to be reformed. Such as sit in darkness and the shadow of death, may have somewhat to say; but they that have the gospel light shining among them, will be speechless when the judgment comes upon them. They that lothe the heavenly manna and trample the Lord's pearls, will rue the time that ever they were so blest and enriched. They will be in much worse case than others, that had no such means of grace, and find that which should have saved them, help only to aggravate their damnation upon them.

O my soul! here must I needs recoil upon myself, when so unsuitable are the improvements that I have made to those advantages which I have had. O what have I done for him, that has done so great things for me? How wretched returns have I made, to him, that has been so much out upon me? Yea, to what a height have grown my sins, even to vie with his mercies? My emptiness of fruit, fills me with shame. And this is my confusion, that when so right in my religion, I should be so widely out in my conversation, and so far behind in that holy way, where I have had such mighty helps to set me forward. O how will it break my heart, and bring
me

me down with sorrow to my grave; if, in the night of death, my work shall be found undone; because I have been all the day idle! the word at last will be given out against the barren tree; "Cut it down, why cumberest it the ground?" And such as are not trees for bearing, will be no better than sticks for burning. For the Lord has a time, to cast off from him, those that have cast his Word behind them. Yea, Matt. xxv. 30. there is a dooming of him to hell, that hid his Lord's talent in the earth.

O let me hear and fear, to prevent the dreadful doom. Let me bewail my neglects, and amend the defaults, and cry mightily to him, whose grace has been so much abused by me, to be merciful unto me, and forgive me; yea, to spare me, and bear with me yet longer; and try me yet further, and enable me by his grace, yet to acquit myself better.

THE PRAYER.

"**T**HOU hast not been wanting, O LORD, to
 " my soul; but, O how much wanting have
 " I been, well to use the price put into my hands,
 " letting all lie barren, as if I had not been blest
 " with any means of increase! My barrenness is
 " a reproach upon me, and threatens heavy judg-
 " ments against me, to make me wish, that no such
 " advantages had been enjoyed by me. O help me
 " to break up my fallow-ground; and to weep
 " over my barren soul. Pardon all the unfruitful-
 " ness whereof I have been guilty; and let me find
 " a quickening power from on high, to make the
 " barren bring forth; and one that has lost so much
 " time, to yield yet better fruit, even in old age,
 " that the mercy which so long has borne with me;
 " may make a way of escape for me; and prove
 " the greatest mercy of all, to make me fruitful in
 " every

“ every good work ; that having my fruit unto
 “ holiness, I may find the end everlasting life,
 “ through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXIII.

Of knowing the tree by its fruits.

ONE would think it a hard matter (if not impossible) for us to tell, who are the children of God, and who the children of the devil ; yet has the apostle laid down a certain rule, 1 John iii. 10. That the worker of iniquity, is not of God, but belongs to another head. If he leads an ill life, be sure he is an ill man. For the works of the devil, so visible in his life, do make it appear, that the devil (though invisible) rules in his heart. Nor is it uncharitable to conclude, that they imagine there is no God, who do live, as if there were none. The wickedness lodged within, discovers itself, by the evil to be seen abroad. And that declaration made by their works, is a stronger evidence to convince them, than all the profession of their words, can be to clear them ; and much more credit may I give to their carriage than to their language. The heart being the root and spring, whence proceed all the actions ; therefore, as the nature of a spring is known by the streams that issue from it ; and the tree that discovers itself, by the sap shooting from the root, and bearing fruit in the branches ; so does man's heart give a demonstration of itself, by the actions

actions that it sends forth in the conversation. And where things are found openly naught in the way of a man's living, it is too easy to understand, that things are no better within ; than they do appear abroad. For by their fruits (saith our Saviour) " ye shall know them," Matt. vij. 16. Man's natural pride inclines him, to set off himself, to the best advantage ; to shew better than he is, rather than worse. And therefore, where his speech betrays him, and his own common behaviour bears witness against him ; it is no rash censoriousness, to take him, but as I find him ; and to judge, that he is as bad, as his usual practice acquaints me of him. Though he cries, that I see the worst ; and must not judge, because I cannot look into the heart ; yet sure I may believe my sense, when I taste the bitter streams, flowing from that fountain ; and though the actions (as open windows) have a full view of the house that he keeps within. And where I may easily err, on the charitable side, in taking that for real good, which is but seeming ; yet cannot the bad alike deceive me, because no good intention can ever justify the evil action ; but let a man pretend what he will, such vile fruit grows not but upon an ill root ; and nothing more impertinent than to boast that the heart is good, when all in the life is found to be so bad. For it is not the fruit that makes the tree corrupt, but the ill condition of the tree that makes the fruit so naught. And how shall I form a good opinion of that man's condition, who makes no better an appearance in his conversation ?

Yet here, my soul, I must beware, of passing sentence upon a man's heart, only by a few particular acts, or some casual slips in his life. For so taking any at the worst, might not I condemn even the whole generation of God's children, when no man
so

so good that never does a bad thing? This character then is not to be drawn from the faults, wherewith he is overtaken, but from the course and habits, to which he is accustomed, and in which he is settled. When that which I see amiss is none of his frequented way but his accidental wandering; not the man but somewhat done by him, when not himself. So the judgment on the other side, which I am constrained to pass, it must be only for the present; that now the man is in so bad and sad a case: True, but what he shall be hereafter, that is in the hands of God, and in the secrets of his council. Whether he shall continue in his sins to the last, and be lost; or whether he shall repent and be pardoned, and saved: I cannot tell, I must not meddle. Though now I see all very naught, and going to ruin; and so far may judge, according to what I plainly do perceive; yet must I not take upon me, to doom him for a reprobate; who (for ought I know) may (by Almighty grace) be yet brought back and set right, and all the danger past.

But, O what presumptuous judges are those, my soul, that will dare to pronounce upon men, not by their practices, but by their own fancies, and sit upon their neighbours souls, to judge the very secrets of their hearts, and condemn them for deep dissemblers, because so they will have it; though nothing can they find in their lives, upon which to join issue, and prove them guilty of such hypocrisy? For where the outside only, is that which lies obvious to our notice; when this therefore looks fair and unexceptionable, what have I to do, to harbour endless suspicions, and cry, God knows the heart, for all the fine cover, it may be but a cloak, to hide what is naught underneath? For thus may the holiest man upon earth (let him be never so sincere, yet) lie under the foulest reflexion, and suffer condemnation,

demnation, from such arbitrary judges, as do indeed, themselves, much more deserve it. But may I ever take heed, of making so bold ; lest, according to my own rigid measure, I should find the severity of judgment without mercy.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD, the only-wise GOD, who perfectly
 “ knowest all hearts as well as lives, and
 “ lookest immediately upon the heart, without
 “ needing to infer (as men do) from observation of
 “ the life; give me so much knowledge of others,
 “ as may direct me how to apply to them, and deal
 “ with them; for their good, and for my own. But
 “ make me still tender of judging, any further than
 “ upon the surest grounds. And where I lie under
 “ any error, may it be rather in others favour than
 “ to be guilty of uncharitable rigour. And above
 “ all, make me, I beseech thee, most exact and care-
 “ ful, in the inspecting and keeping of my own
 “ heart, and in shewing such an unblameable, exem-
 “ plary life, that I may find the approbation with
 “ my Lord, and also shine as a light in the world,
 “ bearing fruits, to the glory of thy name, the edi-
 “ fication of my neighbours, and the comfort of
 “ my own conscience, through faith in Jesus Christ.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXVI:

Of men ashamed to own serious holiness.

WE hear of some that glory in their shame: and may not we (my soul) find too many, that are ashamed of their glory? Even that holy religion, which is a man's crown of honour, and does more than his reason to exalt him above the brutes, and to make him resemble his blessed Creator; giving him a heavenly air, and a mind set upon the divine fellowship, and a spirit too great to be satisfied, even with a whole world. But souls that are blind to the glories of a better world, and stare all upon the creatures, till they forget him that made them, and mind more what is the common fashion, than what is their bounden duty; are ready to count it scandalous, to be in earnest religious, and most for their credit, to have least to do with a thing so much out of request: a thing, which such as here carry all before them, use to look upon as below them. If the greater sort, and the mighty multitudes are not for it; they are afraid then of the disparagement to be seen in it, lest they should go for poor sneaks to be Christ's humble servants, and a company of silly fops to follow one so utterly despised, not only by the proud Socinians, but by the whole generation of worldlings. They cannot then bring themselves to wait upon him for shame, nor find in their hearts to own him for Lord, whose gospel and worship they see every pitiful sinner can make bold to scorn and

trample. Nothing so confounding in their eyes, as to be found upon their knees, as if it quite lost them to seek the Lord, when so few of the grandees believe on him or care for him. And to repent, were to tell the world that they had been in an error, and stood in need of amendment; which, when will pride suffer them to yield? And when will they stoop to his yoke or espouse his cause, who calls them to abase and deny themselves, and to love their enemies, and yield to their antagonists? (Such terms, as they can scarce forbear to curse him, that but mentions them to them.) They must lie in the filth of all their wicked abominations, to save their credit with their old companions, and never be converted for fear of being exposed.

And is the honour of religion sunk so low, my soul, that it must pass for a matter of infamy; but to be suspected for favouring the holy way? Is the righteous man that was thought by the wisest man, to be more excellent than his neighbour, now become a man, fit only to be ridiculed by every bold scoffer? Nay, is it grown so cheap an attainment, to be a child of the Most High, and co-heir with the Lord of glory? How is the case altered, since that time, when they rejoiced to suffer shame for the name of Jesus, and esteemed the very reproaches of Christ greater riches than the world's treasures? I cannot think that men are now grown more wise; but I am afraid they are become a great deal worse. For to glory in the honour of serving and praising the Lord; that is to be wise, even as an angel of God; when the biggest man that is an ungodly man, is viler than the dirt of the earth, in the account of Heaven.

What then, my soul? Shall I be stopped, or checked in the way to heaven; whenever I hear but precise, or any thing that is meant to my reproach? Shall some taunting word, from a mouth, no less
silly

filly than profane, presently give me enough of my Lord's holy religion, and make me think of out-running his blessed service? Courage, my soul! far greater matters than these, shall never part between me, and the great Saviour of the world. No, I know whom I have believed, and who they are, that have cause to be confounded. But they that believe on him, shall not be ashamed. They need not, there is no reason for it; it is their glory, and a higher honour, to be the servant of Jesus, than to be emperor of the world. The confusion belongs to those traitors and rebels, the enemies of the Lord, and it shall not only come home to them, but utterly overwhelm them; in that day of his appearing and glory; when he will, more remarkably than ever, plead the cause of his servants; and avenge his own elect, that cry day and night to him. The rise of these, will then be the fall and ruin of the rest, who could not bring their proud hearts to attend upon him in holy duty; and so will find those hearts broke to pieces, to bear the brands of infamy with which he shall stigmatize them for their stiff impiety. All the flights and contempt shall then recoil, and rest upon themselves. And then will they not be ashamed, to fly (in vain) to those prayers, of which before, they made but a jest? But if now, they will throw away their souls, because they would not be thought to cringe and yield: O my soul, do thou better understand thyself; and only be ashamed, that thou hast not better served thy Lord. Never let any disrespect of a blind, rude world, put thee the more out of conceit with his holy ways. Let who will upbraid, as long as he but approves: what matter for all the contradiction of sinners, when their Judge justifies and favours? May I be blessed of the Lord; and then will I not droop nor care, though I be hissed and derided by the world.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Good GOD! that any should be ashamed of
 “ their glory, and place their reputation, in
 “ declining of thy religion! O how vile is this
 “ world, that would render them vile, who seek
 “ and serve the Lord! and, as if it were a small
 “ thing to despise, and scorn to be seen in thy ser-
 “ vice themselves, revile and scoff such as make con-
 “ science to walk in thy holy ways. Rebuke them,
 “ Lord, and make them ashamed of such wicked shame.
 “ And let none that wait on thee be ashamed; but
 “ let them be ashamed who thus transgress without
 “ cause. O make me so to understand the privi-
 “ lege and excellence of thy service, that I may ever
 “ account it the highest honour to be in thy blessed
 “ favour; and glory in nothing so much, as to
 “ be pleasing to my God through Jesus Christ.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXV.

Of keeping good company.

GOOD company is, in common pretension, the
 desire and delight of all. Who does not de-
 clare for it? Every body would be thought to take
 pleasure in it. And this, indeed would be true;
 should every one abound in their own sense, to de-
 termine which is the good. For so equivocal is the
 term, that what some call good, others know to be
 bad. And of the good, we use to reckon various
 sorts;

forts ; the jocosse, as well as the serious ; the learned and judicious, the kind and courteous, as well as the pious, and religious. Some count none good, but the jovial and drolling : some care for none, but the soft and fawning : and some take them only for the good companions, among whom they can drive good bargains, and promote their worldly advantages. The grave, are censured for fullen ; and the godly, declined, as melancholy : and the scholars, left to entertain themselves with notions, not fit for their neighbours. The proud scorn all their inferiors, and can be upon no fair terms with any but flatterers. The loose and profane herd with their like ; and the very worst members, are, with them, the best partners. And do not they also give shrewd suspicion, to be some of them ; that use to hanker after them, and love to be with them ? For thus do they put themselves in the way, to be made as naught ; if such they be not already : when (instead of flying the contagion) they suck in the very breath of the infected. And no pestilence so dangerous to be caught, as that which walks in the sinful darkness : where men (corrupt by nature) are pleased into ruin, and dispatched with their own hearty consent.

Now, though there be a pleasantness, that (like salt or spice) sprinkled over conversation, gives it a savoury relish ; and they that know how and when to be serious, are wise as well as witty, sometimes to catch and oblige the company, by shewing so facetious and merry ; yet must this (my soul) go but for the garnish and sauce ; and that which must be thy diet and food, is only the virtuous and holy good. Such company then, will I conclude the best, where thou gainest most. None so good, as that which does thee the greatest good ; and helps to fit thee up for that heavenly society, wherein thou mayest live most joyfully to all eternity. So thought
King

King David, that when furrounded with all his noble courtiers, and had the most renowned grantees upon earth, ambitious to be his favourites, yet could tell the Lord, Pſal. cxix. 63. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy righteous precepts." Though there was ſuch a mighty disparity between him and the commonalty; yet, on the religious account, he could make thoſe ſo much below him, as if equal to him; and not only regard, but honour, any that feared the Lord, Pſal. xv. 4. Yea, place all his delight in the ſaints, as the excellent in the earth, Pſal. xvi. 3.

Though every one that is godly, is not what they call the good company; i. e. Not ſuch a helpful neighbour, not ſo well-bred; or of ſuch an eaſy temper, agreeable humour, fine parts, or endearing carriage, as help ſome others to find double reſpects; yet for the holy image of God upon him, and the Spirit of Chriſt in him? (If I have grace myſelf) I ſhall incline to the godly man; as to one that has received from above, the ſame new nature, and is incorporate, with me, of the ſame body. Thus, as Saul, when converted, aſſayed to join himſelf to the diſciples, Acts ix. 26. And the proſelytes, Zech. viii. laſt verſe, ſaid to the Lord's people, "We will go with you, for God is with you:" ſo do I find a bent of heart, to join in fellowſhip with them that are of the houſhold of faith. And how could I ever reckon upon God's love, did I trample his jewels, the people of his choice? How do I love the King of ſaints himſelf; if I have no peculiar kindneſs for his ſanctified ones? If I am not glad to ſee them, and greet affectionately with them, and take ſweet ſatisfaction in them? Wilt thou not be glad, my ſoul! another day, to ſtand with them, on Chriſt's right-hand, and to enter and reign with them in his glorious kingdom? And can it look
hopeful

hopeful and well now, to separate from them, and be a deserter of them, out of disaffection to them, and prejudice against them? When thou shouldest be knit to them, my soul, as David's soul was to Jonathan, and count them dearer to thee than any other company in the world.

But unless I love to be uneasy, why should I frequent the company of the ungodly, who not only look frightful upon me, but are pain and grief, as well as snares and pull-backs to me? I cannot (it is true) I must not, quite shun them; yet will I not keep any needless familiarity with them. O my soul! such society would I have here, as I might enjoy for ever; that when I depart hence, I may change place only, and not company; but pass from saints to saints: from the excellent on earth, to the perfect in heaven. After many of other mens merry meetings, there will be a sad parting; but after pious companions last parting here, there will be the most joyful meeting, in a superlatively better place. And if I cannot, in such a world as this, always have them, yet will I always desire to have them, and love them and prize them: and shew my favour to them, and advocate for them, and in my heart, be ever with them.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD! thou knowest, how much I have
 “ been damnified, and come away by the loss,
 “ out of many companions; and in what danger
 “ still I am, to be rather hurt, than helped, by the
 “ most. Compassionate my infirmities, I beseech
 “ Thee; and give me prudence and grace, to make
 “ me wise and wary, in my choice, and in my con-
 “ duct; and harmless and profitable in my inter-
 “ course

" course with all, among whom I have occasion to
 " negotiate. Let thy dear children be the dearly
 " beloved of my soul; and such be my choice and
 " chief favourites, as are thy true and zealous ser-
 " vants. O raise me up godly friends, and direct
 " me to the best companions, agreeable to my
 " mind, and profitable to my soul. And help me
 " so to use them, that I may find myself the better
 " for them: that such as thou hast made good, may
 " do me good; and I also be made an instrument
 " of good to them: and all of us may conspire and
 " join together, to glorify thy name, and to bene-
 " fit and comfort one another, now and for ever.
 " Amen."

MEDITATION LXXVI.

Of the good man's doing a bad thing.

WHEN I hear any one boasting himself, or his
 friend, that he never did an ill thing: I
 cannot but condemn his ill doing, even in so saying.
 For who can say, "I have made my heart clean: I
 " am pure from my sin?" Prov. xx. 9. To say it
 truly, there is no possibility for any, in this state of
 frailty, where there is not the man that does good,
 and sinneth not; but even the just man falls often,
 and in many things we offend all. So that if any
 man plead his freedom from sin, he does but thus
 involve himself, in further guilt of sin. It is true,
 the good tree cannot ordinarily bring forth evil
 fruit; yet may some of his fruit miscarry, or get
 such a taint as makes it very unlike the rest. And
 though

though it be said concerning the man born of God, 1 John iii. 9. that he does not commit sin; yea, that he cannot sin; it must be understood only, of the going on in a course of sin; so as to die under final impenitence. And the [cannot] in point of foul heinous offences, denotes a strong reluctance; that it goes against the child of God, to run into any such wickedness, even as much as to cut off a limb, or to run himself through: which we say, we cannot do: when as we want not strength, but will and heart, to do it. And the [cannot] in point of sinning unto death, and falling so as never to rise, but perish in his sins; denotes indeed, an absolute impossibility: that the regenerate is kept by such an omnipotent Power, he cannot ever so miscarry by a total apostacy. Therefore, the righteous man, turning from his righteousness, Ezek. viii. 26. is but either one that is only reputed righteous, or else, if he be such in truth: his falling away then, is no more, but such a supposition, by way of precaution, as shall be the means of his preservation.

But that such a one is above the danger of sinning; or that he can never be guilty of any presumptuous sin: or, suppose him to be found in such transgression, that then it destroys the relation, and thereupon he ceases to be the child of God (any more than a man ceases to be a man, every time he is sick, or asleep :) I find nothing in Holy Scripture to confirm that fancy; but doctrine and examples both, frequently to the contrary. For there, do not I hear even the best men, most free and full, in pouring out their complaints, and confessing of their sins? Even St. Paul himself, how does he complain of the "evil present with him; " and his captivity to the law of sin, and doing the "evil which he hated?" Rom. vii. 13, 21, 23. And yet, his hating of the evil, and crying out, as a wretched man, under the thralldom; and with his

mind, "serving the law of God; yea (after the "inner man) delighting in that law:" all this proves him to be no unregenerate man, that did thus complain. So, the scandalous falls of Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, Peter, &c. What are they, but so many mournful instances, of very good men, doing very wicked things; and making it too plainly appear, that the sin, which before conversion reigns, even afterward, still remains? Yet of such, I cannot but entertain better thoughts, than of those Catharists, Prov. xxx. 12. that are "a generation "pure in their own eyes; though not washed from "from their filthiness:" lying in a state of sin, and under all the love and power of sin; yet thinking well of themselves still; even when they sin with greediness, and a high hand; and make as nothing, to do the wickedness, in ordinary, which is so strange a thing, with them that are godly. And how small relief then, my soul, are such like to find from hence, that all are sinners? When so vast a discrimination they shall once see made, between sinners, that the dreadful doom upon one sort of sinners will be, "Depart, ye cursed:" and the joyful sentence of the other sort of sinners, "Come, "ye blessed."

But I dare not censure every one to be in the bad condition; whom I see doing one, or another bad action; nor imitate the perverse spirit, and the persecuting humour of such, as dig in the wounds of God's children; and like flies, gather all about the sore place, to aggravate some evil done by them; without any notice ever taken, of all that is good and holy, hopeful and laudable in them. Nor will I straight conclude myself a counterfeit, because I am still imperfect; or that all is utterly lost, because so and-so, I have missed it; and so ill things have been carried by me, that there would indeed, be no hope for me; should the Lord enter into judgment with
me.

me. For the Father of Mercies, will not presently cast off every offending child; nor damn all, that have committed the things damnable. But "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 1, 2. I will not therefore flight even the least sin; nor, by any thing that I can do, never so well, think to make amends for what I have ill done; yet will I still retain my faith in that blood, which cleanseth from all sin, and there go, and hope to find remedy, even of the sorest malady. I will not be rigid against offenders, nor hasty in casting stones at others, as if I were without fault myself, but restore the fallen sinner, and set the disjointed member, in a gentle manner, in the spirit of meekness; and with all that humanity and mercy, whereof, I know not how soon, I may myself find the sad necessity. Considering my own peril, to run into such scandal, that what is the poor laps'd's turn this time, may be mine the next, I will not then insult over them, though fallen by iniquity, but allow for their frailty, condole their misery, and endeavour their recovery. And I will walk humbly and warily, with a careful heart, better to please my Lord, and earnestly beg of him, who is able to keep me from falling, that he will so preserve me, by his powerful hand and grace; I may not fly out into rebellion against him: and wherever I am carried away with temptations, and miscarry through my infirmity; that he will spare me, as a man spares his own son that serves him.

THE PRAYER.

“ **H**OLY GOD! my sins and miscarriages lie
 “ heavy upon me, and make me ashamed
 “ to appear before Thee; and utterly unfit to ask
 “ the mercy, which they make me so extremely to
 “ need from thee. O how well hast thou dealt by
 “ me! but how ill have I requited thy kindness to
 “ me! thou hast graciously enrolled me in thy fa-
 “ mily: but while I live upon thee, I have lift up
 “ my heel against thee. While I name thy name;
 “ I have given thy enemies occasion to blaspheme;
 “ as if I had a protection to take my liberty, when
 “ obliged and refreshed with such mercy. But still
 “ does this aggravate the sin, which I would so au-
 “ thorise; and makes it more sinful and heinous in
 “ me, than in such, as have not been used so kind-
 “ ly, nor feasted so largely upon thy mercy. No-
 “ thing but thy own rich grace, Lord, can pardon
 “ and heal all such abuses of grace. O shew it yet
 “ further upon me, in forgiving all that has been
 “ done, so unworthily and provokingly by me.
 “ And secure me, I beseech thee, from acting scan-
 “ dalously, or doing any thing to blemish thy holy
 “ cause; and open their mouths against it, who
 “ have no kindness for it. O help me, good God,
 “ to walk circumspectly, and inoffensively; as be-
 “ comes the gospel of my Lord, and my high hea-
 “ venly relation to thee in Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXVII.

Of sins prevailing over God's servant.

DO not I hear the holy David complaining, Pſal. lxxv. 3. "Iniquities prevail againſt me?" And may not I wonder, my ſoul, that ſuch a one as he, ſhould make that complaint; or ever be ſo tempted and worſted? But no wonder at all, that he ſhould cry out under the temptation and oppreſſion, as one fore afflicted and diſtreſſed, upon ſuch a lamentable occaſion. For, O what greater croſs could befall the ſervant of God, than ſo to be brought under by the enemy of God! Sad experience had this his ſervant, of falling into ſo ill hands: and, during that grievous thralldom, how does he bewail his wounds, and broken bones! And when once got clear, how did he importune his Lord, to keep him from preſumptuous ſins! that ſo, a ſervant of the Lord, might enjoy the happy liberty of the children of God, and be made free from the law of ſin and death. For they that ſtand ſo related to him, have the promiſe from him, That ſin ſhall not have dominion over them; but their Lord and Father will come in, and ſhew his power, and love, to relieve them.

O my ſoul! am I not the ſervant of God? So it is my dignity to be called: and as ſuch, it is my rejoicing to be owned. But, alas, how often has ſin brought me down? How wretchedly have I been dragged captive? And, O! in what danger am I ſtill to be ſo retaken! Now, whither do the oppreſſed uſe to fly for help, but to ſuch as are in power, and among whom they hope to find friends? And even
in

 • MEDITATION LXXVIII.

Upon the remembrance of former miscarriages.

WHO can understand his errors? O how many of mine have I forgotten; and the memory of them is gone, even as if no such things had ever been done? But other offences I cannot so soon slip, nor so easily get them off, though long since committed by me, they have not yet done with me, but are ever before me, afresh to haunt and harass me. Common failings use to disappear, and go off, as things of course, to be heard of no more. But the great transgressions of my life (like dark eclipses, blazing stars, or some dismal prodigies;) make a rueful figure: and leave behind them deep and lasting impressions. The times of liberty and extravagance, fly back upon me; and places where I have set up my remembrance, witness against me. The foul gashes struck into my mind, and the sad breaches made upon my peace, still stick to me: and, after a poor transitory gratification, I groan under a keen and tedious vexation.

O my soul! though the act of sin soon is past and gone, yet how long after may the blot and scar, the sore and clog, remain behind? Conscience, that is God's surveyor and register, not only takes, but keeps account of what has passed; and will not suffer me to forget some things, which give me no pleasure to remember. Let me strive (as I will) to throw it quite away; yet my sin will find me out. Though I cast it behind my back, it will return and
come

come about to stare me in the face. He that wrote bitter things against Job, and made him possess the iniquities of his youth, Job xiii. 26. And made David complain, Psal. xxxviii. 2. "Thy arrows stick fast in me; and thy hand presseth me sore:" and told his Israel, Jer. ii. 19. "Thy own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee;" he will not suffer me to escape; without a troublesome feeling of my sins; but will awaken the dormant guilt, to recoil upon me; and set the ill things done by me, in order before me: Nor is this only his justice, but his mercy; so to deal by me: to crucify the body of sin in me; and render it still more loathsome to me, to make it remembered by me in such a penitential remorse, grating upon me, that he may not remember it against me, in a way exceedingly worse for me.

When therefore (my soul) I feel such old aches upon me, and my spirit wounded within me; and perceive an army of pursuers behind me, and many scores on the file against me, and make me cry out, amazed and terrified, Woe is me! What have I done? What shall I do? Whither shall I betake me? How shall I avoid the teasings of my conscience, and the justice of Heaven? "My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness:" How am I bowed down! and into what grievous straits am I run! so hard goes it with me; yet, blessed be my God, that there is hope and help for me. Though it put me to shame, yet shall it not put me off my prayers; and though it may well fill me with fear, yet shall it not sink me into despair. But it shall abase my soul, and alarm my care, and hasten my flight, to escape the threatening danger, and to seek a retreat, where I may be yet in safety. And O where, my soul, can that ever be, but under the covert of my crucified Saviour; who is the propitiation for our sins; and by putting them upon his

in this, my woful case, have not I a Lord, to make my refuge, that is almighty, and quite too big for all the power of the enemy? And where may I expect such relief against the incursions of sin, as with my Lord that loveth holiness, and hateth wickedness? Where am I so like to speed against such a foe, that is his, as well as mine; the opposer of his glory, as well as of my felicity? Take heart then, my soul, against the unjust power that would have thee under in betaking thyself to him; whom no powers, even of hell, have any power to resist, when he will arise to take them in hand. But at a word of his, Satan himself will fall like the lightening, and the chains of thy sins drop off to the ground, and the strongest lusts lie dead at thy feet. If he but say to them, Be gone; all will be cut off that trouble thee.

And how canst thou fail in that request which he so favoureth? When he cannot be better pleased than to be so intreated, to give the thing, in which his soul delighteth, that sanctification, which is his own will and pleasure. And he that has pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, knows that they can never prosper, as long as in the hands of the worst usurper: till the sins that domineer over their souls, be trodden down under their feet. To him therefore, my soul, do thou repair, when afflicted, for transgressing his undefiled law; and weary of groaning, under thy hateful sin: when it encroaches upon thee, to usurp his authority over thee; and thou hast not strength to deal with such an adversary, that has a party even within thee, too mighty for thee: when, if he reveal not his glorious arm, to enable thee against it; and to set thee above the danger of it, thou wilt yield to it, thou wilt be enslaved, quelled and ruined by it: O cry out to him, and call hard upon him, to arise and help thee, to rescue and deliver thee, for the glory of his name; to send his hand from on high, and make
his

his work to his servant appear, in setting thee free from the prevailing power of thy deadly foe; and yet, raising thee up, to triumph over all that casts thee down.

THE PRAYER.

“ **I** AM thy servant, LORD; and thou hast the
“ sole right in me: and all the just claim to
“ me: but sin grows upon me, and gets the ascen-
“ dant over me. And as I am annoyed, I shall also
“ be destroyed by the cursed enemy; if thou, my
“ God, do not repress, and make it flee before me.
“ O let not a servant of thine be injuriously detain-
“ ed, in such base hands: but take thou, Lord, the
“ government of me; and rule thou over me. Set
“ me so free from the service of sin, that I may be a
“ servant pleasing to my Lord: such a servant, as is
“ also thy freeman, thy child, the heir of thy hea-
“ venly kingdom; the object of thy fatherly care:
“ now easy in thy nurture and retinue; and
“ hereafter, happy for ever in thy love and glory.
“ Amen.”

THE PRAYER.

“ **A** H LORD ! what a rotten foundation is any
 “ thing in myself, or in this world, which
 “ I have the biggest expectation from, for me to
 “ presume upon ! I throw myself down in the dust,
 “ before thy holy, tremendous Majesty ; to reflect,
 “ how proudly I have carried, and how confident I
 “ have been, in a poor, sorry case : of which I may
 “ well be ashamed ; and for which I ought to be
 “ humbled. O make me so to know myself, that
 “ I may no more exalt myself. Drive me out of
 “ all groundless presumptions, and false refuges,
 “ that are insufficient for my defence and security ;
 “ and direct all my hopes and dependencies, to the
 “ only sure Rock of salvation, thy dear Son, my
 “ blessed Lord Redeemer. Amen.”

 MEDITATION LXXX.

Of the Publican's justification.

EXCISEMEN (whether for their abuses in collecting the taxes, or from the people's ill-will, in paying their pence ;) were of old, got into such an ill name ; as to be ranked with some of the most infamous sinners. And publicans and harlots we find yoked together, Matt. xxi. 31. Yet, as bad as ever they were, he that came to seek and save the lost, does there open to them, a door into heaven ; which he shuts against others, that seemed much their betters : even those Pharisees, who, under a fair

fair profession, covered the foulest abomination : one of which our Lord, Luke xviii. represents coming into the temple, with a Publican, to pray : though his prayer was but catechistically so called ; being, indeed, rather ostentation than supplication : nothing but a self-preachment, to boast his goodness, and scorn his brother ; even that Publican, who (not so forward to advance himself ; but as one conscious, broken, and timorous :) it is said, stood afar off, and hung down his head, not daring to look up to the offended Majesty of heaven ; and smote on his breast, in token of sad remorse ; knocked upon the heart, that corrupt fountain of all the evil, which had overflowed to defile his life. He was not only for confessing his guilt, but for taking a sort of vengeance on himself ; to inflict some voluntary penance on such a criminal, as he took himself to be. And the mercy that he needed, he begged, in such terms, as signified his understanding of the way to speed. Be merciful (*ἐλεηθῆτι*, propitious) to me, a sinner. *q. d.* Let me find my happy share in that grand propitiation, which the Son of God makes for the sins of the world. And so he rightly sought justification, by faith in Christ.

Now here, my soul, according to the fine tale that the Pharisee had to tell, for himself ; thou mightest think him much aforehand, with that despicable wretch, so mean and low in his own eyes, as well as in his haughty supercilious neighbour's. But see the different event, surprising to the one, and the other ! He that justified himself, is rejected : and he that condemned himself, is acquitted. For what is justification, but God's gracious absolution, and discharging us from our guilt ; and taking us into his favour, for the sake of his own mercy, in our blessed Saviour ? And the likelier then do we stand for that mercy ; the higher we magnify it, in the low abasement of ourselves. The lovelier shall we be in

his

his sight; the viler we are in our own. And so far shall we be from losing, by our humble submission, that he will make it the very foundation of our glorious exaltation.

It is God that justifies. But see here, my soul, the way of that peace which he gives. Some dispute and plead for justification, by their own good and righteous deeds: for which they hope, God will so remember them, as to forgive and save them. And thus they come with their price in their hands, to make the purchase of heaven. But the gift of God is not to be bought, unless without money, and without price. Some will vouchsafe indeed, to talk of faith in Christ: while yet they can hardly forbear to let us understand, that they look upon it, but as a kind of a jest: because still they are for building all their hopes upon works; and value themselves, as the only preachers of righteousness; for laying the whole of salvation, on the foundation of natural religion; and then who but they, for the right good men, that contend so hard for justification by works, and never think they can caution you enough, against the righteousness of faith. Now, there is a sort of sanctity, that shews glaring in the eye of the world; and serves to puff up Pharisees, and make them look big, and talk lofty. But, alas, the mighty opinion that some have of their own righteousness, is the mighty obstacle in the way of their justification. "For to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5. He that came to save those that apprehend their woeful need of his salvation, and was upbraided, for receiving sinners; such will he not reject, but take them up and single them out, upon whom to glorify the riches of his grace, For he that can have no ends, beyond his own glory, is most signally glorified, in looking graciously upon the poor wretch
that

that vilifies himself, even as nothing, and worse than nothing. And where more illustrious does appear his salvation, than where the dead are made alive, and the lost are found?

O then, what shall I plead, my soul, but my guilt and misery, as the main inducement, on my part (next my faith in Jesus Christ) to move the divine mercy? yea, let me not barely confess, but aggravate the sins upon me; and by making the worst of my matters, hope to speed so much the better at the Lord's hands. Let me remember and imitate the Publican: that following the way which he took, I may find the favour which he obtained. For Christ will profit me nothing, if all my sins go with me even for nothing, I must cast myself down, before he will take me up. And what I cannot get, by standing upon terms; yet may I gain it by the abasing of myself. Not that any humiliation, can be the cause of my justification; nor that any thing I can do for myself, will make me worthy, that the Lord should do so well for me; but the self-judging, and soul-humbling way, is so hopeful and effectual a way; because it is the Lord's own appointed means, to secure unto me the promised forgiveness of my sins. Though a very poor recompense it is, for the highest offence, but to acknowledge it, and shew a sorrowful concern on that account; yet, when I know my transgression, and am humbled for it, and turned from it, there is an atonement provided to set me clear, and a Saviour ready to bring me off. And where I cannot be justified by my works, and deserve only to be condemned for my sins; yet will the Father of mercies, for his Son's merits, spare me, and the God of all grace, in his Christ, be gracious to me; and let me find, what infinite goodness can do, and what wonders almighty compassion can work, to set me right, and make me whole, and easy now, and safe and happy for ever.

THE PRAYER.

“**A**ND teach and help me, O LORD, my God,
“ in the humbling and abasing of myself,
“ and in the true remorse and contrition for my
“ sins, and the fervent and prevalent supplication
“ for thy mercy. O make me such a penitent, and
“ such a suppliant, that I may find pardon and ac-
“ ceptance with God, through Jesus Christ. Make
“ me duly sensible of my unworthiness and wretch-
“ edness; and put me in the way of humility, which
“ is also the way of my peace: that coming upon
“ my lowly confession and submission, I may expe-
“ rience thy reviving grace, and blessed favour: for
“ the sake of my dear and only Saviour. Amen.”

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THE NINTH DECAD.

MEDITATION LXXXI.

Of partiality in God's service.

Read in Scripture, of a halting between two, and offering of the lame for sacrifice ; which is such a serving of God by halves, as cannot be with any good acceptance in his sight ; when he has but the tongue, and another master goes away with the heart : it is not, indeed, to serve, but to affront the Lord, and to give him mockery for service. Though men may count themselves cunning and frugal, so to part stakes, and divide between God and Mammon ; yet will he curse those politics, and confound all the seeming wisdom. So he did in the case of Ananias and Saphira, Acts v. Whose pretension rose high : and they desired to be thought as religious and devout, even as the best Christians of those days, in selling all, and offering it to the Lord ; but they reckoned it wise, to keep somewhat for themselves. To make, as if they laid down all at the apostles feet, that was for their credit ; yet, to reserve a part, that was according to the rules of self-preservation. But while they divided thus with God, he divides them from the world, and divides their souls and bodies, so that both of them suddenly fell down dead.

O my

O my soul! it is an entire service, that I must give unto God; or else nothing do I give him to content. For when all is his due, he will not be satisfied with a part. Though false gods (like the false mother, 1 Kings iii. 26.) may take up with half, yet the true God (like a true mother) will not endure to hear of dividing. No, I must walk with both legs (upright) before the Lord, if I would walk so, as shall be to well-pleasing. However he will take me, as I can go (be it but in a slow pace, when I am frail, and withal, sincere; yet must it not be with the halting gate; when I am hollow and rotten. I must not talk of serving God with my heart, when I hold back my body, much less offer him my body, when I give him none of my heart. To hold men in hand, that I am God's servant right and good enough within; though I shew nothing like it in my outer man (his servant, in some invisible manner, no one can tell how:) to fly away from the places and offices of his worship, and still lay claim to a good heart, without frequenting and attending the means of grace: what is this, but to serve my own humour and pleasure, and instead of doing service to God, putting my slights and tricks upon him; so serving him, as I should be ill pleased, to have my servant serve me: to say, he honours me, and is trusty to me; but he disobeys me, and leaves my work undone; going where he has a mind, and doing what's his list: only cries still, Your humble servant. And must the great Lord, take it thus at my hands, when I am so proud and stiff that I will not down on my knees; nor let any one see me so humble my body, to wait on the glorious God, in such a lowly manner. If he have my heart, that will draw along with it my body too; and as long as I am able I shall not keep off from him; but love to go, and attend upon him.

Nor

Nor shall he have only the dead carcass, without any lively affections; an appearance among his worshippers, when my true self is somewhere else, and my thoughts and heart rambling abroad; for instead of waiting on my God, is not this to come and despise him even to his face? Not only to bring vain oblations to him, but to carry on my abominations before him? when my whole man, soul and body, is all little enough, to be laid out for him, who no less deserves, than requires it all. I will then glorify him in my body and in my spirit, which are his: which both were made and redeemed, and still are both preserved and comforted by him, and do both entirely belong unto him. It is not for me to divide myself, and part soul and body before the time, to offer him the one without the other. It is not to keep my body from him, nor yet to come without my soul before him. No, but I will pray with my mouth, and pray also with my heart. I will hear with my ear, and attend also with my heart. He that hath given me both, shall be served with both, tongue and ear without, and heart and mind within. What he has joined together, I must not (will not) offer to put asunder. Where he requires my bodily presence, I will not be out of the way; and when he calls for my heart, I will take care, that this shall not be wanting neither. His service I was made for: his service, it is my glory, as well as duty, to be true to. If I be treacherous in it, as good I never meddled with it. O what labour in vain will it be, to do many things, and be never the better for all that is done? Yea, what a sorrowful service, to go here in the tail of God's retainers; and, after all, have my portion with hypocrites! O my soul! am I in earnest for heaven and everlasting salvation? Then must I be in earnest also for God, and for a serious religion. I must prefer nothing before him,

him, set nothing above him; but leave all for him, and make it my choice and my delight to be taken up with him, that being found so upright before him, I may, at last, receive the most reviving sentence from him.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD, my GOD! I am altogether thine :
 “ soul and body, and every one of my powers
 “ and faculties, they are the work of thy hands,
 “ and made to be employed in thy service. But I
 “ have wickedly withheld them from thee; yea,
 “ and laid them out, to serve even thy enemies,
 “ against thee. For which I humble myself before
 “ thee, and earnestly beg pardon from thee. O for-
 “ give thy treacherous servant, for the sake of thy
 “ dear Son; and make me yet faithful, by the effi-
 “ cacy of thy almighty grace. Help me, both soul
 “ and body, to serve thee sincerely and entirely,
 “ that my heart may be right with thee; and all
 “ that I am and have, be devoted to thee; and so I
 “ may approve myself true and upright in thy ser-
 “ vice, that I may be graciously accepted in thy
 “ Christ, my Lord Jesus. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXII.

Of care to please men, more than God.

BE it never so much against all reason, as well as religion, to esteem a poor piece of animated clay, more than the most glorious Maker of the world, to stand in awe of perishing dust and ashes, and the while, make as bold as one's list, with the great supreme Lord of all that lives and reigns for ever: yet, that so (in fact) it often comes to pass; how plainly does it appear, my soul? Not only in the case of Naaman, who confessed the Lord, to be the only God in all the earth: and yet (to ingratiate himself with his master, the idolatrous king) must needs be excused, to "bow down himself in the house of the idol Rimmon," 2 Kings v. And in the case of Herod, that was for catching Peter, after he had killed John, Acts xii. When he saw that it pleased the Jews: and in the case of Pilate, who would give up the Lord, in whom he found no fault, to be crucified: because he was willing to content the people, Mark xv. And in the case of those chief rulers, that are said to believe in Christ, John v. 44. But because of the Pharisees, did not confess him, lest they should be cast out of the synagogue; as "loving the praise of men, more than the praise of God;" but, O how frequently may I see it verified still, in abundance of instances about me, every day, almost every where! the man-pleasing humour, being planted in every one's nature; but the care of pleasing God, wrought in the soul, only
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by his heavenly grace; this therefore is so very rare, when nothing more common than the other. Who are not for pleasing those men, whom they even naturally love or fear? But, alas, how few, for the pleasing of God, whom none have in such high regard, but his children alone, that are supernaturally shaped and fitted to it, by a new light and principle received from above? Nature works impetuously its own way; and therefore are many so unreasonably and viciously pleasing to men, as having somewhat in their very nature, that puts them upon it. And when it is to curry favour with such as are able, either to damnify, or to pleasure us; to give us trouble, or do us a kindness, though we have never so much greater things to fear or to hope from God, than from any men in the world; yet the men being visible, where God is not to be seen, we are apt to regard those most that are present before our eyes, and to forget the absent even as if they were not at all, because not conversant with us, nor seen and observed by us.

Besides, that the resentments of men are quick and keen; and seldom have they the patience, long to defer their anger; but such as please them not, may soon be aware of them, to their own displeasure: whereas the heavy consequences of God's indignation, are looked upon, as at a vast distance; and so slow is he to anger, that such as offend him now, peradventure may not hear of it, till their death; nor find the punishment, but in another world: Now, because men, so generally are all for coming off well here, to enjoy the good, and to escape the evil at present; therefore do they more look upon that, which is to be got or lost in this life, than all that God has promised or threatened, relating to the life hereafter. O how cautious and wary then, to carry so fairly and inoffensively to all; that none may cry out, or find advantage against them! But,
alas,

alas, how slack and regardless in all the offices of God's holy service ! if a great man, that has power over them, has some matters of anger against them, all the skill and friends, and interest, and application possible, shall then be used, to get him pacified. But, when the great God has far heavier articles to lay to their charge ; and his more dreadful wrath judgments hang over their heads ; yet how secure can they sleep and take their ease ; and follow, not only their business, but their pleasures !

But, O the blind and wicked living so without God in the world ! when all shall be done with respect to men, as if they were all in all ; and little or nothing made of it, to slight and affront the Lord, in such a manner, as they would not do their superior ; no, nor even their common neighbour. Though God command, and conscience urge, and ministers importune them, to repent and turn ; yet their vicious companions will not hear of any such matter. No, the brethren in iniquity will not part with them so. They shall not have leave to be converted, but be made the common derision, if they offer at it ; and then, no further thoughts of it. Thus are they men's slaves, as well as the devil's. And to keep in, and ingratiate themselves with the vile knot, they will venture the losing of themselves for ever, with the most high Lord.

Now, how harmless soever any may account this man-pleasing (which is not to others edification, but to their own destruction) O how black is that guilt which turns me out of the service of Christ ? And I cannot but be treacherous and false to him, where I am so easy and compliant with those that are against him, Gal. i. 10. Bethink thyself then, O my soul ! who is it that must judge me ? And who alone that can save me ? They that are so hasty to judge me now ; shall they sit upon me hereafter ? They that would now 'tice me on, in wicked ways ; can they

deliver me from the wrath to come? Alas! how soon will they be out of the assumed commission; and fallen quite beneath all capacity of giving the least relief? Nay, whoever be the person, whatever the thing, for the sake of which, I forsake and despise the Lord; instead of yielding me any succour and relief, they will prove my plague and curse. O may I then overlook, and undervalue all men in the world, compared with the only living and true God. May I so set him up in my thoughts (like himself) as indeed all in all; that I may look upon all of this world, in respect of him, even as nothing; and be more proud of his service, than of any grandee's favour. Let me never make even the most topping man, the idol to which I cringe; nor ever set God and his service at naught, to make some profane superior think the better of me. But whoever else be pleased or displeased, may it ever be my desire and care and endeavour, to approve myself pleasing to my God, through the beloved, in whom he is well pleased.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND strike into my heart, O LORD, such an
 “ awful reward of thy eternal glorious Ma-
 “ jesty; that I may ever carry towards thee with
 “ all reverence and godly fear; and cease from
 “ man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein
 “ is he to be accounted of? But thou, even thou,
 “ O blessed God, art ever to be feared and loved,
 “ and attended, and pleased, before all, and above
 “ all else in the world. O let me not so much fear
 “ any man, that shall die; as the great, almighty
 “ ever-living God; and mind thy presence, and stand
 “ in awe of thy word, and not venture upon any
 “ thing that I know to be offensive in thy sight,
 “ that

“ that I, and all my ways and conduct, may find a
 “ gracious acceptance with my God, through Jesus
 “ Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXIII.

Of the worldly carefulness.

WHEN our Lord bids us, take no thought for our life, nor the body, nor the morrow; and when his apostle says, he would have us without carefulness, and be careful for nothing; should it not seem, as if the gospel had a design, to take men off their business in this world, and to make them slack and regardless, what became of all their concerns here on earth? And does not hence arise the outcry against Christianity and its blessed Author, and also its ministers, for preaching us into beggary, and pointing out the way for all, to run to loss and ruin? And such as count it the highest commendation can be given of a man, to call him a careful man, and one that minds his business, and contrives and manages all to the best advantage, will never endure the religion, that would disparage their most needful qualification: when so they take the doctrine, that there is no being good Christians, but they must be bad husbands.

Yet here, my soul, let us see, whether the objection do not grow upon a misapprehension; and some wrong notion of the carefulness prohibited and condemned. For what word of God does censure such a care even for the things of this world, as our heavenly Father (who knows we have need

of these things also) knows to be needful; because without it we could not have them? Such a care as is kept within the limits of moderation, and justice to men, and submission to the will of God; when it is not an exorbitant care, for vanities and superfluities, and the world's wealth, and honour and pleasure, more than for God's grace and love, and favour, when it does not top over the care for the soul, nor jostle out the one thing needful; nor take us from seeking the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, before all, and above all: when it does not put us upon stretching out our hands to iniquity, and hastening to help ourselves by any indirect means, but makes us careful of our own, in the truly honest way, without injury to any; and when we submit all our desires and cares, for our ease and advantage in the world, to the good pleasure of our God, and refer all to the decision of his wise providence, whether we shall succeed in our designs, or be cut short of our ends: all this is the care, that we need be in no care to vindicate; for it is its own sufficient apology.

But the wicked carefulness for the world, is that which rushes in at unseasonable times, to disturb us in our worship and attendance upon the Lord: and so destroys the peace of our minds, also at other times; as to perplex and distract us, about the issues of things, that are out of our reach; and makes us entrench upon God's part, anxiously to forecast, what shall be the event; (which belongs not to us) and to be peevish, and touchy, and troublesome, at every rub in our affairs, and every damage in our goods; yea, to cry and clamour, even as if undone; when things here do but go against our minds. If we will take so much upon us; why then do we complain of our load, which we might cast upon the Lord? And when we will so disquiet ourselves in
vain,

vain, and pierce ourselves through with many needs forrows; how well do we deserve (as fools) to be afflicted? What can we effect, by taking such thought, unless vexation to our spirits, and damage to our souls? For when my thoughts are so engrossed, and swallowed up, and buried in the world; what becomes of my religion, and the devout attendance upon my God? How do the thorns of worldly cares then choak the seed of his heavenly Word? And the lean kine devour the fat; and the plodding for a moment, ruin all the most weighty concern for an infinite eternity? Yea, what contempt do I thus cast upon the providence and promises of God; when I will trust to neither, but think to be my own carver and provider; and go to snatch the donation of blessing and success out of his hands; as if it belonged to myself, who have nothing to do but use the means, and not trouble my head concerning the events?

O my soul! what heed should I take of such a vehement concern for this world, as shall leave me short of a better? For what agreement between the worldly mind, and my heavenly hope? When I am otherwise bestowed and employed, than to make any thing of it indeed, to work out my salvation: when anxiety and solicitude for the things of this life, do so take me up, and fill me full; O what room then shall I find for the thoughts and care of those most important effects everlasting? Yea, what fitness for the life and bliss of heaven (that society and felicity above) when I stand so affected and addicted, to muddle in the dust of the earth? How could heaven itself please me; when it has no more influence upon me, no more power to draw me a more excellent way? When I am of a spirit and genius so unsuitable to that holy place; to live with God, and relish the pleasures of his house? O how watchful then must I be, of this world's encroaching and thrusting

thrusting in ; to fill my thoughts and take up my mind, and carry away my heart ; till I grow strange to God, and quite lost to my own heavenly country ? How fearful of entangling myself so with the affairs of this life ; till I am detained and stopt in my pursuit of the eternal glorious prize ? O my soul ! can I think temporal things worthy of such mighty care, and not think thee, my most precious, never-dying part, deserve to be remembered ? Is it worth while, so to cark, and beat my brains, and make such a rumble in the world ; to keep off want, and get enough ; to live plentifully and pleasantly on earth ? And is it no matter of concern, to escape the damnation of hell, and to lay up in store against the time to come, that I may live blessedly for ever ? O what is become of my thoughts, that here they are not busy at work ? Away with thee, my soul, away to the blissful enjoyments and entertainments above, that incomparably more deserve thy care and love, than all the most tempting objects, in this poor earthly orb, to be found. Go, lay up thy treasure in heaven ; that there (with it) may be also thy mind and heart. Leave men of the world to stuff and turmoil themselves, with those thoughts which all must shortly perish : and all that care for ever be at an end with them ; and their beloved world itself left for ever behind them. O may I find greater matters, to possess my head, and engage my care ; and scorn to let a base transitory world hold me so fast : and hinder my soul, from centering there ; where it may be infinitely easier and better. Let things here go how they will with me, whatever in this world befalls me ; O why do troublesome thoughts arise in my heart ? I will commit myself to the Lord, and leaving all in his good hands, set my heart at rest, to think that he thinketh upon me, and careth for me ; and will never leave me, nor forsake me.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD! thy Word takes off this world,
“ and calls us to mind and seek the things
“ above. But between providing for the flesh, and
“ the cares of this life; so has my heart been plung-
“ ed and sunk in the dust of the earth; that those
“ things above, have been above my thoughts; and
“ the most desirable attainments, least of all in my de-
“ sires. So have I filled my mind with thoughts of
“ worldly things, and so eagerly pursued these poor
“ inferior goods; that I have forgotten God that
“ made me; and even cast away the care of
“ my soul, and slighted the things of my peace,
“ and the duties of thy service; and disquieted
“ myself in vain, about empty trifles, and perishing
“ trash; to the neglect of glory, honour, and im-
“ mortality. O good God! forgive these wild
“ excursions of my thoughts, and this sinful mis-
“ placing and lavishing of my cares. And take me
“ off all such care for the body, and for the world,
“ as hinders the caring for my soul, and for thy
“ heavenly kingdom. Abate my concern for things
“ temporal; and increase it, for those that are eter-
“ nal. O let it be a small thing with me, what I
“ have, and how I fare, here upon the way; but
“ give me, Lord, the most careful heart; to think
“ and contrive, what I shall enjoy hereafter; and
“ how it shall go with me for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXIV.

Of the fair shew made by false professors.

O My soul! how many do pass in the common tale of Christians and believers, as God's children, and Christ's members, that have only the name to live, when they are dead? Judas was numbered among the apostles; yea, Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. So many fine dresses, good looks, smooth words, and fair representations, impose upon us; when there is nothing underneath, to answer the expectation thus raised in us. It gives a tolerable reputation, in a profligate age; but to be free from scandals, and not so vile and mad as the rest. We are ready to take men of fair morals, even for saints: though they may be no converts, nor possessors of any true grace. Those I esteem yet higher, whom I find orthodox in their opinions, and sticklers for the saving truths of the gospel; but when further yet, they shew their respects to religion, so as to keep up constant offices of worship, I begin then to be sure of them, and make the charitable conclusion, that all is, as it should be, with them. Yet if they rest in the name, and think it enough, to hear well abroad; however things lie at home: if, like statues and pictures, they want the spring and principle of life; and the machines only move by some foreign impulsions, of ostentation, or worldly considerations: if they have no communion with God, nor find any pleasurable gust in the acts of spiritual life, if there be no growth and thriving
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in them ; either by the addition, or consolidation of parts ; but, as dead images, still they abide at the same stay : O then what will all avail them, that appears well and specious in them ? Even virgins, that carried their lamps in their hands, found a sad repulse from the Lord, Matt. xxv. 12. Though they went for his, he would not know them. And what the better shall I come off with my eternal Judge ; for blinding the matter before some of my poor fellow-creatures ! O my soul ! how shall I thus mischief others, that embolden themselves, to rest in my case ? And what a heavy curse shall I bring upon myself, to be such a counterfeit ; in professing the good, that I never made good ; and taking up the *holy cause*, only to its abuse and reproach ?

Though I am not then to throw off a good profession, for fear of being twitted with my religion ; nor to turn a notorious offender, that I may not be censured for a sly hypocrite : (for the fault is not to have a name ; but to have that, and nothing else, nor to be reputed good ; but to be only so called, when nothing such indeed) yet must I take care to answer the meaning of my name, in the conduct of my life ; and never content myself, to hear upright and godly, when I know to the contrary. For, alas, what a cypher is the best name, without a correspondent nature ? And what can it add to my stature, or to my treasure ? When in the midst of a seeming life, I am in real death ; and walk as a *spectrum* in the church, appearing to hear, and to pray ; but in hearing, I hear not ; and in praying, I pray not : do all in formality, and nothing from a root of life : have no vital union with my Saviour ; no heart or activity in the way of my duty : in this case, what though others ignorance or charity, may incline them to think well of me, as long as the eye of Heaven cannot be so eluded by me ? When I propose to myself base ends, or carry on ill designs ;

how soon will he that searches the heart, be aware of me? And how does it concern me, to get all right in thee, my soul, towards him? however I appear in the sight of men? To be so open and candid, ingenuous and sincere, without trick or reserve, that I may have a humble boldness with him, and a comfortable expectation from him; and my praise may be, not of men, but of God? And when he will but take me for his own, what matter who brands me for a hypocrite? Then may I rejoice in such a mistake, and bless the name of God, that it is not so with me, as they do pronounce upon me.

THE PRAYER.

“ **T**HE dead praise thee not, O LORD, speak
 “ life to my soul: and I will sing, and spread
 “ the honour of thy name. Help me to make the
 “ good profession; and also to justify it, by an
 “ agreeable conversation. O make me better ac-
 “ quainted with my own heart; and more con-
 “ cerned, to have it right with God. Let me not
 “ so much regard the character or opinion, that
 “ others have of me; as the approbation of my
 “ Lord, and the sentence of thy Word. And let
 “ me receive the grace from thee, to make me such
 “ as thou wilt be pleased to accept of me, in thy
 “ dear Son, my only Saviour. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXV.

Of serving the Lord with fervency of spirit.

O My soul! I must not only serve the Lord, my God, in truth and sincerity; but also with sprightliness and alacrity. And not go about the offices of religion, as sick men, about the worldly business; without life and vigour, dull and flaggy; only because I cannot well avoid to be so engaged; when I had rather be otherwise employed; finding no attractives to it, no favour of sweetness in it; nothing to whet and heighten my appetite after it. For, O the little regard which this argues me to have of the great God; when in such a cold and slight way, I can do the work of the Lord: did I highly think, as I ought to think, of him; should I not be more on the stretch, and make livelier efforts, in my attendance upon that holy, jealous Majesty, who rejects and loaths all the cold sickly services, that have no more than the surface and shadow of religion in them? For what is done (*pro forma*) but of course; to escape the censure of the world; it is of no more significance with him, than if never done at all. And, if it signify any thing at all, it is not only the contempt, by which such triflers do but provoke him, so to serve him.

What then shall I think, my soul, of those that scorn and brand all zeal and fervency in the service of God? That are all for mediocrity here, and the soft and fair? Cannot away with such as shew more nervous, lively, and affectionate, than themselves?

Why

Why so fierce, and hot upon it? If any at all, as little as you please of religion. Out with these hot-headed zealots, that help to set the world on fire. Nay, one cannot be so much as warm in God's cause, but presently shall hear, factious, and turbulent; you had better be quiet, and let such matters alone; lest you get nothing by the mettle and fervency, but to be censured and spighted for your arrogance and hypocrisy. But let who will thus vent their spleen against such an excellent property, and necessary duty, what do they, but bring in suspicion, all their own sincerity? For who can have the heart right with God, that do never warmly espouse his cause? Or how can any religious duty be performed acceptably, without a mixture of fervency? To condemn all zeal then, and burning devotion; what it is, but to let fly at God's holy Word; and all true religion?

Yet how, alas, does the leaden spirit, and the frozen temper (in all the things of God) still hang upon us? How faint and crazy, forced and heavy, are the services of most worshippers? What heights and flights, and flames of devotion to be seen? Who contends for the faith, and pleads for holiness; and girds, and gives himself to the service of God, and to the work of the Lord, with all his might? O my soul! beware thou be not pulled down with the common distemper; but exert that life and concern, which is the property of Christ's redeemed; the peculiar people, zealous of good works. The works themselves are common to hypocrites, with the children of God: others (after some sorry manner) may do them; but only such as are acted by the Spirit of Christ, will do them with love and liking; with intention, and earnest application. And these are the patterns, worthy my imitation. After such, am I to act, with a warm concern, becoming my high and holy profession, and worthy my glorious heavenly

heavenly expectation. O let me be ashamed, to see the men of the world, more eager upon their Mammon and lucre: or to see the men of pleasure more hot and keen, upon their sports and games, than I to gain heaven, and to secure the sweetest and best of all pleasure, that will last for ever.

O may I well remember, that in doing the duties of piety, I am doing for God, and working for eternity; and then, not only pray, but be fervent in prayer; nor only praise the Lord, but lift up my heart, in the high praises of God: nor only repair to the sacrament, but fly as an eagle to the prey; to seek and find and enjoy the Lord my God and Saviour there: nor only look and aim at heaven and life eternal; but strive and soar, with activity and diligence, to obtain it. O may I stir up the grace of God that is in me; and lay out all the ability, that he has given me; so to excite and enflame the love and zeal of others, and to exercise and heat myself, into a heavenly ardour, and even rapture, of devout attendance upon my Lord. Let me not only move a little, and creep, and go; but run, and stretch, and haste, to the blessed entertainments with him, whom my soul loves: that there I may fall into the sweet and only center of my soul's rest: and never be quiet and easy, till I reach that felicity; or find myself on the ready way, to be so happy.

THE PRAYER.

" **B**LESSED LORD, the living ALMIGHTY
 " GOD, who givest power to the faint; yea,
 " quickenest even the dead: and makest them able
 " and ready to every good work; who, without
 " thee, can do nothing: O work upon my dull,
 " dead soul, by the powerful Spirit of grace: and
 " give me life, in such a measure and abundance;
 " that

“ that I may not offer thee the languid, lifeless service ; but may be full of zeal and devotion ; and fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord : and so engage in thy worship, and stir up myself, to take hold of my God ; that I may find thee to the satisfaction of my soul ; and serve thee, to good acceptance in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXVI.

Of serving the Lord with gladness.

O My Soul ! what more discourages the serious practice of religion ? what more keeps men off from any hearty engaging in the holy service of God, than the supposed dolefulness of the employment ; and that trouble and melancholy, which so many do imagine to be inseparable from a godly life ? Here does the devil improve (to serve his own cursed purpose) the enmity of our carnal minds, to make us run away distasted, and prejudiced against duty ; as that, which he would persuade us, will our ruin our joy and tranquillity, while he misreports the good land, and scares us with fictions of monstrous giants, and walls not to be surmounted, that we may start back at such *Mormo's* of imagination ; desert an easy yoke as intolerable, and fly from the Lord of love, whom we may be glad with all our hearts to serve. But in this, how like himself, is *the father of lies* ; to traduce and slander the ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace : and so keep silly souls in a plausible vassalage, under his cursed tyranny : out of that panic fright, to take leave of all
delight

delight and gladness, when once they turn, to follow after serious holiness?

Whereas indeed, nothing in the world would make us so glad as this change; and of nothing have we cause to be so proud, as of this service; where, instead of losing our joys, we find them in the fountain head; and do but exchange a sorry sort, for those infinitely better. O what Lord can I ever serve that is so good? And therefore, where can I be so easy, as in his retinue? When I go to God, my God: it is also to "God my exceeding joy," Psal. lxxiii. 4. And shall not the "children of Zion" be joyful in their King? Even the "heart of them may rejoice, that seek the Lord," Psal. cv. 3. Such a God, such in himself, the supreme good, and the fountain of all joy, and such also to them: their Father, their Saviour, their Refuge, their Righteousness, their Counsellor, their Comforter, their Salvation, and their everlasting glorious Portion; their hearts were senseless, did they not find them disposed, to serve him with gladness. When this, he lays not, as a pain upon them, but grants it as a blessed privilege to them. Nor is it his will, that they should sigh out their days, and go down in sorrow to their graves: he would not have us torment ourselves, to please our God: no, but makes his pleasure, ours; and his service, our souls solace.

Though comfort then, is none of my desert; yet will I honour him; in expecting far better than I deserve from him: and in going cheerfully about his work (as never better pleased than to be so employed) I will confute the world's harsh opinion of his holy religion, and endeavour to make it look like itself in my comfortable conversation. For I am sure the fault is not in the service but in myself, if I do not make it a pleasurable business and matter of delight, such as I would not exchange for all the wild mirth

of the world. To find the Lord enabling me by his grace, and favouring my pious designs, and accepting my poor endeavours, reducing my wandering steps, and keeping them in the way of righteousness: lifting up the light of his countenance on my soul, enlarging my heart with the tokens of his love, and reviving my spirit with the witness of his Spirit! O my soul! after thou hast felt all this, say if there be any pleasures and joys, comparable to those found in the service of God! to shelter under the wings of Omnipotence, and be bold in my God, and sit down with delight under the shadow of my Saviour, and look upon the glorious Bridegroom of souls as mine, and myself as his: to have an open prospect of his heavenly kingdom, and not know but the next day still, may translate me into the joy of my Lord! O how well then, with gladness may I serve him, when filled with that blessed hope, to be so soon for ever with him! and in the mean time, to pour out my soul with the greatest freedom, into the bosom of my dear Almighty Friend; and (when I will) make known all my state, and all my desire, to the Chief Lover and Beloved of my soul! What, O what so refreshing to thee, my soul! Unless that marrow and fatness, which fills thee to recount the mercies and loving kindnesses of the Lord, and to give him the honour due to his name, in praising him with joyful lips. Which is, and ever will be, the business and delight of all the blessed above! and O what greater thing can be said of the greatness of this joy!

Thus has the servant of God nothing to do, but what he may find delight in the doing. And let the world think as it will, of his life and his way; O what life so sweet: What way so pleasant, in the world? Though deluded sinners will not believe, what themselves have not felt, but run upon many sorrows, to avoid the very thing, which would make
them

them joyful with all their hearts: yet what can be ever named like this, to be in the favour of God, and have his kind looks, and his reviving encouragement; to know that I am doing the work, which will please my Master, my Father in heaven! O what so eases my heart, and cheers my spirit? Then may I go my way, and “eat my bread indeed with joy, and drink my wine with a merry heart, when “God accepts my works.” Ecclef. ix. 7. Never is the ingenious artist more merry, than at his work, when it fadges to his wishes, he can leave meat and drink and company, to bring it to the desired accomplishment: and does not the husbandman count even his labour a pleasure, when he is sowing his ground? If then God’s service be the best work, and the most hopeful seedness; O my soul, shall I not take pleasure in it, and go through it with gladness? Not that I imagine any merit of my works, or ever think of earning heaven at God’s hands. Long enough might I labour at it, ere I could rejoice in it: must I so deserve salvation, or go without it. The pelagian principle could never make me merry; did I suppose all to hang upon my will and duty. But when I believe, and am persuaded, that I have a Saviour and surety, who has paid my debts, and a gracious Father, who, (for his sake) takes all in good part from me, that is but well-meant, though poorly performed, by me: this puts activity into my hands, and gladness into my heart. And after I have been thus accustomed to my duty, such practice gradually wears off the difficulty, and makes the service easy. And though often I lose my way, after I have been set right, and renew my sorrows, by new falls, into grievous sins: yet as soon as I am sensible and humbled, God in Christ is reconciled; and causes me to hear joy and gladness, that the broken bones may rejoice. And so the clouds go off, and heavenly day-spring appears afresh. Thus, though

even still sinning, yet I may be even evermore rejoicing: though often with trembling. Sorry for it, but glad, I have such a remedy against it; fain to groan under the body of this death: yet thankful to God, through Jesus Christ, that I shall be eased from it, and come at last to triumph over it. Yea, though saddened, to dwell in Mesech and Kedar; and how can I be joyful, where I see nothing but my Lord's dishonour? Yet at the same time, I feel a secret pleasure, that God has made me to differ. So, I sympathize with my fellow-members, when sufferers: and Zion's distress and calamity makes me pensive and heavy; yet am I taught to rejoice even in tribulation, as a token of God's love, and a part of my way to heaven. And how many times here, may I find the verification of that paradox, *The worse the better*: when that which makes against us in this world, works for our greatest good in the next? And so, in all times, even at the very lowest, God's servant has somewhat at the bottom, to sweeten a bitter cup, and keep up his heart: which makes him much aforehand with many, that yet seem much more merry. They may laugh louder, but he has the real cause to be far joyfuller. His joy dwells deeper, and will last longer. It is not, indeed, to be expressed: nor can it ever be lost. For it is joy unspeakable and full of glory: and such a joy, as will endure and hold out to an infinite eternity.

THE PRAYER.

“ **F**OR ever bound am I, to magnify the riches
 “ of thy grace and goodness, O Lord my God;
 “ that thou hast made me fit for the honour and
 “ happiness, of attendance on thyself; and made it
 “ my delight, as well as my duty, to serve thee. O
 “ how.

“ how glorious is the heavenly employment ! the
 “ the greatest reason have I to be glad of it, and to
 “ rejoice in it. O bring my mind to it, and give
 “ me a heart set upon it. Give me the will and
 “ skill, the grace and encouragement, to serve thee
 “ with gladness ; to love thy work, and delight so
 “ to be taken up ; and never so well pleased with
 “ myself, as when most pleasing to my God, through
 “ Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXVII.

Of God's Power and Glory seen in the Sanctuary.

THAT “ exceeding greatness of God's power,
 “ towards them who believe ;” Eph. i. 19.
 When he sends the gospel in power to captivate the
 soul ; and bring men up to his own terms : when
 he gives his word authority, to go and seize such a
 rebellious sinner, to pull down such a stout heart,
 to revive such a drooping soul, to reconcile such a
 cross-grained creature to his duty, and make him
 diligent to do that will of God, which before he
 could not abide : O my soul, what a glorious power
 is this ! how much surpassing all other men or an-
 gels ! and though the Holy One be not limited to
 times or places : yet the Almighty Power, which he
 declares most chiefly, in shewing mercy and pity, he
 does exert most commonly in holy places, in the use
 of his own ordinances : and sends “ help from the
 “ sanctuary to strengthen the worshipper out of Si-
 “ on.” Psal. xx. 2. There does he meet with sin-
 ners, and catch attentive hearers, to convince and
 convert

convert, to rouse and refresh, to instruct and establish, as various cases do require; and sends away many one better minded, and affected, and resolved, than they came there. There does his work appear to his servants; who feel such mighty impressions of his eternal truth, as they are not able to withstand. And there do they see such a divine beauty, and majesty, in the ordinances, filled with his presence; as renders his tabernacles far more amiable than all the outward adornments can make them. This sets out the church, as the very gate of heaven; when the generation of them that seek his face, find the God of heaven there, shining out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, looking with a benign aspect upon them; and cheering them with the tokens of his love, and the foretastes of his glory. Then are they easy and glad in the house of prayer: and there would they dwell for ever, to behold such beauty of the Lord, and enquire further in his temple. Never is God more glorious in their eyes, than when he seats himself among them; to distribute his favours and graces upon them. O my soul! what a powerful magnet is here, to attract thy desires, and longings; to come and appear before thy God, and to frequent the happy resorts, where he makes his flock to rest, and to feed! O how dear should they be to me! how should the habitation of his house be loved by me! what a mighty bias should I have to the place, where God records his name? That there I may find it, as I have found it; when I saw the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary: when he satisfied me with the "goodness of his house, even of his "holy temple!" I cannot but think of his loving-kindness there; the sweet and happy hours of intercourse with my God; when he bowed the heavens, and came down, to remember me, with the favour borne to his people, and to visit me with the joy of his salvation; when he encouraged me to
draw

draw nigh to him, and be bold in my God : when he filled me with rejoicing, at the great things that he had done, and with hopes of the greater, which yet he would do, for me. Such a time, did he send home his Word, and touched my heart, to make it soft and melting. At such a sermon he broke my soul, for my sins ; and put me out of conceit with them, and made me resolve against them, that I would not be as I had been ; nor ever do as I had done. In such a church, he opened heaven ; and let in light, to shew me such sights, of himself, and of this world, and the next, as I never saw before. In such an assembly, he threw open a door of hope to me ; and made me sweetly sensible of the everlasting mercy that he had in store for me ; and made my heart burn within me, to know the things which he had freely bestowed upon me. These, O these blessed experiences, are my heavenly riches : the sealings of his Spirit, and some dawnings of his glory. Let who will glory and boast, in the interest and welcome, and favour and boldness that they have with these and the other grandees of the world : I will ever glory in the Lord, and declare with the greatest rejoicing, what the God of all grace has done for thee, my soul : how I (unworthy I) have been treated, and caressed, by the King of kings ; with what peace, and hope, and kind looks, and the best of all things, I have been entertained at his house, and at his table. These do I reckon among the joyful evidences of my adoption, when the gospel has so come to me in power, and in the Holy Ghost. And these are the reviving cordials to fetch up my fainting spirits, what time I am afraid, that God has forgotten and forsaken me. These do I look upon, as the seeds of eternal life, which he has sown in my heart ; and the pledges and earnest of those unknown everlasting goods, which he has laid up for thee, my soul. O may I still so see his power
and

and glory, as I have seen him in the sanctuary, till he bring me to that (yet) more blessed sight, the vision of himself above; to see him, not only through ordinances, darkly, as in a glass, but see him face to face; in whose presence is the fulness of joy.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** THOU that humblest thyself, even to behold
 “ the things in heaven; and yet in wonderful
 “ condescension, art pleased to impart thyself unto
 “ thy poor creatures on earth; to look upon them,
 “ and come to them, and dwell among them, and
 “ and have communion with them: be graciously
 “ pleased to manifest thyself still further to my soul;
 “ and make me more sensible of the blessed presence,
 “ and joyful in the house of prayer. O let me find
 “ it the Bethesda, to heal my diseased soul, and the
 “ porch of heaven, to revive my drooping spirit.
 “ Let me love thy house, and seek thy face; yea,
 “ let nothing be so much desired by me: nothing
 “ so delightful to me. Grant me, Lord, to feel the
 “ power of thy grace; and to rejoice in the light
 “ of thy countenance: that I may for ever admire
 “ and magnify, such thy special mercy, and favour
 “ to me, in Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION LXXXVIII.

Of cleaving to the Lord.

AFTER I have broken off with other lovers, and given up myself to the Lord, then must my care be, to hold what I have attained, and to keep the better station, in which I am placed. That I may not lose him whom I have found; nor let go the heavenly treasure with which I have been enriched. It is not, to play the hypocrite with him, that searches my heart; nor must I think to put upon him, when I am nothing hearty with him, but let him find me upright before him, as ever I hope for the glorious rewards of a faithful servant from him. O my soul! what will it avail me, to halt between God and Mammon, when I am not determined for him, nor resolved to stick to him? I am not faithful in his covenant, till such time as I come to the peremptory conclusion, that no person or thing in the world, shall ever take me off. And if, indeed, I do love him, so shall I settle my abode with him. For love will fix me in his arms, and make me there so easy, that I shall not desire a change. What I sincerely love, I shall be very loath to leave. When the Lord puts his fear into my heart, there is the curb to hold me in, that I depart not from him. Ay, but when he sheds abroad his love in my heart, there is the surest tenure, so to secure me, that I will not then be gone, I have no mind to it, I cannot endure the thoughts of it.

Yet

Yet here, alas, is the danger still, from my defectiveness in that love; and my so frequent losing the sense and feeling of it, in thee, my soul. And when there is a restless tempter at work, to make me his prey; and a world about me, so full of allurements, to steal away my heart; yea, a heart within me, so prone and easy, to be seduced the wrong way? I shall then certainly be gone, if I am not resolute. Yea, how can I stand, if I call not in the Almighty Lord to my help? Nothing, under positive resolution, will set me above the peril of temptation. When I am wavering and in suspense, what do I but give place to the devil? But I must resist him, ere he will fly from me. O how often has he prevailed, to carry me after him? And how tenacious then have I been of the ill ways whither he has misled me? Now (my soul!) shall I not do as much for the Lord as I have done for his very worst enemy? Shall I not be as really at his service, and as deep in his interests? I am sure, it is my own greatest interest so to be. For, alas, what shall I do without him? And if I let go my hold of him, how shall I escape the ruin, which waits for all that fall from him?

But seem it never so much against the grain of flesh and blood, now to leave all for him; yet how shall I rejoice with all my heart hereafter, that ever I was so wise and well advised? Let who will censure me then, for shewing a more than ordinary concern, to keep in with my God: O may I ever account myself best in the hands of my blessed Lord, and rightful owner! to be his adherent and favourite, who is higher than the greatest of kings, and better than the dearest of friends, and will never reject any that cleave to him, never be weary to do for them; but when all here fails them, will be unspeakably better than all the world could have been to them. Here then, my soul, here set up thy rest; and let nothing come between thee and thy God. Let nothing tempt thee

hee to part with him; let nothing ever be able to separate thee from him. O remember how continually thou dost need him, and how much more need yet thou wilt have of him, when thou shalt find all else quite gone, but only him. Remember who must stick to thee, when the world fails thee, who must then keep and comfort thee for ever. And no longer demur or tick upon it, to undervalue and despise all else, that thou mayest have but the Lord for thy God, and till keep in with him, and continue in his love:

THE PRAYER.

REDUCE, LORD, my wandering heart; and bring it home to thyself. And keep it faithful in thy covenant, and full of care, to withstand every temptation, that would pull me another way. O whither should I go from thee? What shame and loss, and ruin, should I consult to myself, in turning my back upon thee! O my God, preserve me, I beseech thee, and secure me in thy blessed hands; and enable me to cleave to thee with purpose of heart, in the way of thy Word, all the days of my life. Amen."

MEDITATION LXXXIX.

Of eternal Life, as God's gift.

IF it be our heavenly Father's good pleasure, to give his little flock the kingdom: however then must take continual care to be fitted for it; yet never let me proudly imagine to make any purchase of it. For it shall be given to them for whom it is

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prepared. But none of our preparation is the cause or motive of that donation. No, it is God that saves us: "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. And if the thing were done, before we had a being, how could it depend upon our doing? Or what then could we do, to deserve any thing, before ourselves were any thing? What room here for any merit, if the sons of pride would not haul it in, by mere violence? When "by grace we are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. How arrogant then is that man, whoever dare rise up to divide the honour with God, and set free-will to jostle with free-grace: when, till he quicken us, we are dead; and without him, can do nothing? Shall we offer to contradict our blessed Saviour himself, and tell him, thou hast not chosen us, but we have chosen thee? Is it possible, that our faith and works foreseen, should be the cause of our salvation, when they spring all from God's election; and men believe, because ordained to eternal life, Acts xiii. 42. and are predestined, not for good works, but to them, Eph. ii. 10.

Alas, my soul! did not the Lord take us up, even at the worst, to save us when lost? Sure then he did not find, but make us meet for the inheritance of his saints in light. Yet, upon what difficulties here will some of the old Pelagian stamp, still run themselves; and force and rack the Holy Scriptures, to speak their pleasure; when the express declaration of it, in so full a stream, runs clear another way? When before the state of grace, we are so passive: that not a step can we stir heavenward; yea, even after grace received, our best good is yet so imperfect, as to carry in it a mixture of evil: how then can that which itself needs a pardon, deserve a reward? O the stout-
ness

ness and envy of such, as will not suffer their Maker to have all the glory! as if his giving were really no giving, but only by way of traffic and exchange; (*Quid pro quo:*) when the plain truth is, that his gifts are pure gifts: and how dear soever our redemption cost the Son of God; it costs us nothing, but humbly and thankfully to receive his kindness; and (going along the way of his gospel,) to enter that kingdom of heaven, which he has not only opened to, but purchased for all believers.

Now here, my soul (here) is indeed the strong consolation; that the Almighty God himself is the Rock of my salvation: when I am so weak, and mutable, and sinful, and apt to go all to naught, and undo myself, even after all that the Lord has done for me, that my hope of heaven is not bot-tomed upon my good works, but upon his good pleasure; not upon my worthiness, but upon his promises. And hath he said, and shall he not do it? Can my weakness hinder his purpose? When the trust is not lodged in myself; but I am kept by the power of God, through faith, to salvation: His free grace then, his eternal truth, his dear love in Christ, opened to my soul; these, these, are my strong hold, my shield and buckler; my sure tenure, and my unshaken foundation that shall abide for ever. Here will I rest, thus will I ground my faith: not upon any thing to be enjoyed in the world, nor upon any thing that can be done by myself, how well soever I acquit myself in my work, what good advance soever I make in my way, to give me hopeful prospects of the blessed end, though I rejoice in it, take encouragement from it, and bless the gracious Lord for it; yet will I not build my confidence, nor bottom any claim of heaven upon it: no, but upon the kindness and love of God my Sa-viour; the favour that I have found in his sight,
and

and the grace that I have received at his hands ; and the gifts and calling of God that are without repentance : here will I set up my rest ; and to nothing else will I trust.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**LL the good that ever I have in hand or in hope, O LORD, it is of thy grace and thy love. What shall I render? O what can I do, but acknowledge the love ; and love thee, who hast first so loved me ! O that I may know the things, that are freely given me of God ; and have a due sense of all my wonderful obligations to the Lord ! O that I may give thee the whole glory ; and for ever magnify the riches of thy mercy ! and go on, gracious God, to perfect thy own work in me, and to crown thy own gifts to me, and lead me on still to further degrees of thy grace, till thou hast fitted me for, and brought me to, the kingdom of thy glory ; which is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

MEDITATION XC.

Of looking to the Joy set before us.

O MY Soul ! how poor a crop is all the joy, that grows out of this barren earth ! here and there a little sprinkling, and that with so much mixture and alloy, that we are often puzzled to tell, whether it be the genuine product or not. Even the

the joy of the harvest, that sounds with such an emphasis; alas, what is it but a drudgery and toil, to the very flesh that feels it! the joy of a child born into the world draws tears from the infant, even at present: and soon after, how commonly, more from the parent? The fresh and frolicking joy of a wedding, may be so near souring; as for its wane, to prevent that of the next moon. And even those that marry, to find joy; the apostle warns them, 1 Cor. vii. 28. that they "shall have trouble in the flesh." The conquerors joy, shall prove to be nothing but a prelude to their own downfall: and their dividing the spoils in the field, the immediate forerunner of death's dividing his spoils of them in the grave. And O how many the fruitions and successes, and pleasures, in which men are greatly rejoicing, do quickly turn to the crosses and afflictions, that set them all in mourning! True joy, how great a stranger is it, in this vale of tears! how rare a visitant? And what a nimble guest, that goes, even as soon as it comes! The seat of joy, O how far does it lie above this tumultuous, cloudy world! here Pilgrims and Viators are pursuing it: it is only there, that the saints and comprehensors, do enjoy it. The joy that will satisfy and fill us, it is above us, and yet before us. We may look towards it, but cannot yet reach it. Now and then a cluster of Canaan's grapes (by a kind hand) may be dropt down to us; but the happy land itself is at present barred up from us.

It is so high, my soul, I cannot attain fully to understand it; yet how much does it concern me, to enquire after it, and to inform myself still further about it? Because the foresight of such a glorious place, gives new life and limbs to the faint and weary traveller; and makes him resolve not to lose it, though he pass through fire and through water to it. But it is a joy unspeakable; O what can I

say of it, that shall not detract from it! and it is a joy full of glory, too bright and sparkling for me to gaze upon it. I must feel it, before I can thoroughly know it. For it cannot enter the thoughts of my heart, till my soul enter into the joy of my Lord. This I know, that it is pure, and full, and transporting, and everlasting. A joy so compleat, nothing can be added to it; and a joy so secure, nothing can diminish from it. Now to think, that all is most joyful in heaven, above whatever I am able to think of it: O how should this enflame my longing after it, and make me slight all the joys, as well as troubles of this world, to get but safe to it: O thou unkind world, even with all the greatest of thy kindnesses, which do but thrust in and stand in my way, to eclipse the glorious objects, which thou wouldest tempt and detain me to lie short of! but I will not accept the entertainments so much to my cost; when I have reason to suspect a joy, as well as sorrow of the world that worketh death. O may I find and experience the joy of my Lord, in whose favour is life.

It is true, my soul; I cannot look upon it with such an eye, as my Saviour did, in the days of his flesh: when he endured the cross, and despised the shame, for the joy set before him. For he knew it, where I do but believe it. And he could make the purchase of it: where I must hang all upon his merits, and be wholly beholden to him for it. Though in the way of holy duty, I must be travelling to it; and without works of obedience, it is idle for me to expect it; yet, O what can I ever think of doing, to deserve it? Alas! how often do my sins wrap me up in such thick fogs, as intercept all my prospect of it, and damp all my hopes, ever to obtain it? It is too sublime and great, too ravishing and good, for me, a frail creature, and vile sinner, to receive: yet not too great or good, for my Lord, and my God,
my

my Father, and my Saviour, to give. The depth of sorrow, is the due portion of my sins: but the fulness of joy is the free gift of his grace. What small joy then can I take (my soul) even in looking to the joy set before me; if first I do not look to Jesus, the great Author and Finisher of our faith; meriting for me? It is he that gives the good hope through grace: and Christ in me, that is my hope of glory. So that I must rejoice in Christ Jesus, before I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. It is through believing in him, that I come to "rejoice with the joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. And the "God of peace, fills us with all joy and peace in believing," Rom. xv. 13. Where then, my soul, I come so short in other respects, I must help myself by this faith, and so get an interest in that righteousness of my Saviour, which will entitle me to the kingdom of his glory. For thus do all believers come upon a level; even the least with the greatest: according to that of our divine Post,

"If bliss had lain in art or strength,

"None but the wise or strong had gained it:

"Where now, by faith, all arms are of a length."

Take heart then, my soul: and run with cheerfulness, as well as patience, in thy course: where there is not only so glorious a prize before thee; but the sweet light of encouraging hope, breaking out upon thee. And it is not insignificant, to use thy poor endeavour, where thou hast that unknown relief of faith, in such a most worthy and Almighty Saviour. Go on therefore, believing, and trusting in him; till thou comest to live and rejoice for ever with him.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND now, LORD, what is my hope, and my
“ joy; but that which I repose in thee, O
“ blessed JESUS; who hast shed thy precious blood
“ for poor sinners, and opened the kingdom of hea-
“ ven to all believers? Had I no comfortable expect-
“ tation of heaven, but what I drew from myself,
“ and built upon my own works, how sadly then
“ should I droop? And how quickly would all my
“ hopes give up the ghost? But never will I faint,
“ nor yield to despair; when I have the Son of God
“ for my strength and my Redeemer. O help me,
“ blessed Saviour, so to believe in thee, that I may
“ also rejoice in thee. Yea, give me, gracious Lord,
“ such reviving foretastes, of thy unspeakable glo-
“ rious joy, as may revive and encourage my dull
“ and fainting soul. O shew me the joy of thy sal-
“ vation, that I may run with an enlarged heart, in
“ the way of thy commands; and not only faith-
“ fully, but joyfully, serve thee all my days.”

THE TENTH DECADE.

MEDITATION XCI.

Of the outward signification of Devotion.

THOUGH bodily exercise profits so little, that I dare not lay any great weight upon so weak a support : when I know, that the life and spirit of religion lies in the heart ; and that the surest dijudication of a man, is not from what he appears abroad to the world, but from what he is within, towards God : (too much concern for the outside, often arguing but too little, somewhere else :) yet is it fit, that true religion in the root, should also shew like itself in the branch. Yea, it is apt to form a decent figure, even in the gesture and carriage of the worshipper. God, that is to be worshipped in the beauties of holiness, must have a decorum in the person, as well as in the place : nay, more sure is his regard to the living temples, than to those made with hands. Never are churches so adorned, by the neatness or splendor of the structure, as by the reverend and awful behaviour of such serious and pious company, as are its best and richest furniture. I love not to see men antics ; neither can I be pleased, to have them slovens, in the religious attendance. They that use to carry respectful and decent towards men,

will do very ill, to forget all their good manners, in the presence of God : as if they came before the Lord, only to make publication there, how bold they can make with him, and how little they care for him. To loll, and yawn, or sleep : to prate, or laugh, and play the wantons, in time of worship ; is to offer provocation, for adoration : when the gravity and composure, the attention and air of devotion, should make it appear, that we well remember and bethink of ourselves, where we are ; and with whom we have to do ; and that we are some of those, who know how to serve the Lord acceptably, with reverence and godly fear ; it is not enough then, to have it in the heart ; but so must we express it to the life ; that our very looks and deportment may be edifying ; to set off our religion, and make such as behold it, taken with it, and drawn into the imitation of it. For where religion is enthroned in the heart, it will have its due influence also, on the outward man and bodily worship, however the least part of God's worship ; yet still it is a part, and such as cannot be neglected, without scandal given to others, and suspicion also of contempt cast upon him, whom we so do serve. O how do such as can be rude in their worship, express that fear of God, and conscience of their duty, which is the necessary proof of their sincerity ? And at the same time, that they offend their neighbours ; do they not as much disgrace themselves, and bring in question the truth of all their religion.

O my soul ! how ill should I hold in those significations of devotion, which would be a common benefit, both to myself, and to my company ? And how can I think their example worth the imitation, who are so shy of discovering their religion, that they will scarce drop a pious expression, nor so much as a sigh, or a groan, or amen, shall be heard from them. Though it might help to warm, and quicken

ken all about them, yet will not pride suffer them to be seen in so small a piece of their duty, lest they might thus incur the censure of hypocrisy. But here, my soul, how little need I regard, who takes me for a counterfeit pretender; when God knows me to be a hearty worshipper? And if the service be such, as I have more cause to be proud, than ashamed of; the more then may I value myself upon it, when I am zealous and earnest in it. And where I can but contribute any thing, to promote such an excellent design, as the service and glory of God, and the edification and encouragement of them that seek his face: let me venture all their censorious opinion, who are no friends to any warm devotion. Let me not spare giving vent to that which it is pain and grief for me, to trifle and hold in. But when the fire is kindled within, let it flame out, to ease my own breast; and also to warm and animate those near to me, that they may be stirred up, and helped on by me.

Let me lift up eyes and hands, with my heart, to his holy habitation, who dwells in the heavens; and not use the church, as a theatre, to gaze about me, and make remarks and reports, of what I have seen, instead of minding what I had to do. For more truly might that be called pastime, than devotion. But let all that observe me, find a pattern of piety fit to be followed in me, even the burning zeal and overflowing affection, worthy their imitation: and such as speak those well-discharged acts of religion, to be also the likely means, and hopeful fore-runners, of my own salvation.

THE PRAYER.

“ **G**IVE me, O LORD, a devout soul, the true
 “ spirit of religion, and the principle of thy
 “ heavenly grace in my heart; and teach and help
 “ me also, to signify, and express it, in a suitable
 “ manner; and comely behaviour, without affecting
 “ to be seen of men; yet not without some instruc-
 “ tion and advantage to them. O may I so inward-
 “ ly draw nigh to thee with my heart; and so out-
 “ wardly carry in thy worship, also with my body,
 “ that I may neither profane thy holy things, nor
 “ scandalize any of my neighbours; but bring glo-
 “ ry to thy name, edification to others, peace to my
 “ mind, increase of grace, and assurance of glory,
 “ to my soul; through the merits of Jesus Christ.
 “ Amen.”

MEDITATION XCII.

Of serving God with the best.

IN all the world do I know any one, that makes
 not some pretensions to the service of God?
 Who would not be called and thought his servant?
 But among such multitudes of professors, O my
 soul! what slight and wretched service has the Lord,
 from the most of men! many that count nothing
 too good for themselves, and will have all that ever
 they can compass to fulfil their own pleasure; can
 yet think any refuse stuff, and even the worst of all,
 to

to be good enough for his portion, whom they call their Lord. The formality of worship, the shell, the picture, the shadow, the counterfeit of religion : the fragments of time, which they know not what else to do with, the dregs of age, the evil days of calamity, the tail, the gleanings of life and health, these must suffice for the blessed Giver of all. That which costs them nothing, or that can best be spared ; as being neither gainful nor delightful ; is all that they will afford ; to the God in whom they “ live and “ move, and have their being.” They are only for the cheap religion ; yea, the very name of religion, will serve their turn. But that religion which strikes into their Corban ; and would make their hearts large, their bowels tender, and their hands open ; it is too chargeable, and no religion for them ; no, they will part with their only Saviour, rather than with their worldly pelf, or their darling lusts, or their exorbitant liberties. And it is only when they have nothing else to do, or know not how otherwise to dispose of themselves, that the Lord shall have them : *i. e.* have their bodies, in some sort of attendance upon him, when no other company, business, or diversion takes them off, or draws them elsewhere. But let him call for their hearts, the male in the flock, the flower of their time, and wit, and care, and love of zeal ; they must then be excused : and nothing but a complement, and the talk, or bare mention of service, shall be all his allowance.

O my soul ! what can I give the Lord my God but of his own again ; that he has first given me ! what have I not received at his hands ? Even myself, and every good thing for this life and a better ; is it not his gift to me ? Yea, his Son and himself, has he withholden from me ? And shall I withhold any thing from him, or count it too dear, to part with to him. O how well does he deserve all my
best,

best, who has conferred upon me all the best? And shall the great God, be put off with any poor scraps, and worthless leavings? O what can be good enough for him! and how great is the favour, to have any thing accepted by him? When the temple was to be built, a house for the Lord, to be set up; how does David describe it? 1 Chron. xxii. 5. "It must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and glory, throughout all countries." And the reason was given, 1 Chron. xxix. 1, "The work is great: for the place is not for men; but for the LORD GOD." Therefore should it be (as far as could be) worthy of him. Abraham would not withhold his son, even his only son, from him. And I do not know him, or I do forget him, and conceive base contemptuous thoughts of him; when I have better present, and go to put him off with the worse. O never let me think to come off well, in so playing the deceiver: which is the way for me to be not only deceived, but accursed. Let not my Maker, my Saviour, have the dross and dregs, the chaff, that which is good for nothing. Yea, never let me think the chief and choice, the prime and best, so well bestowed any where as in his service. For who has done, as my God, who has done for me? Who can, or ever will so well pay and reward me? Never then let me slightly serve him; but with all my heart, and be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. Let me feed his poor, and give liberally, according to my ability; and let the Lord see, that I have nothing of the world, which I cannot most freely and cheerfully part with, to him, and for him. Yea, let it not stick at the right-hand, or the right eye: if he will have the one cut off, or the other plucked out. *i. e.* To him, let me give up the vile lusts, to which my heart has cleaved, and the ill haunts to which I have been impetuously addicted. Yea, let me rest assured, that to give the best to him, is also to do the

the best for myself. However I may be tempted, and allured another way; and know where, better to please my flesh, or to promote my gain in the world; yet let pleasure and lucre both, veil and stoop to religion, and the honour of my Lord. O my soul! let him be ever most highly esteemed, and first served: and for his sake, let all else, be postponed and undervalued, and nothing ever thought worth the listening to, that would pull me from my God; or that would come between him and my heart.

THE PRAYER.

“ **W**ORTHY art Thou, O LORD, my GOD,
 “ to be served with all the best that I
 “ have; and with exceedingly better than all that
 “ ever I am able to give. It is thy great condescen-
 “ sion, to accept any of our poor services from us;
 “ yea, that thou shouldest be pleased, at all to use
 “ and employ us: when thou dost nothing need us,
 “ nor can we ever be profitable to thee; but all the
 “ good and advantage redounds only to ourselves.
 “ O help me so to present myself, soul and body, a
 “ living sacrifice to God; and to devote and offer
 “ up my services, and all that I am, and have; to
 “ be laid out and employed, at thy pleasure, and to
 “ thy glory; that I may never dare to slight and
 “ despise, my great Lord, and blessed Giver of all:
 “ but in thy holy fear, may worship before thee;
 “ and in thy dear love, may do all heartily to thee;
 “ whose I am; and from whom comes all that I
 “ have. To whom be all the best service, and the
 “ highest glory, now and for ever. Amen.”

MEDITATION XCIII.

Of the fear of God, arising from love.

AS there is a fear of God, into which men are driven, by the dreadful apprehensions of his avenging Majesty : so is there a fear of God, into which men are drawn, by the sweet belief of his goodness and mercy. Such a faith begets a dear love : and such a love produces a holy fear. For when I believe the everlasting kindness of God in Christ Jesus, that he has for me ; so does this take with me, and gain upon me ; that I feel love enkindled in my heart to him ; who has first so opened his love to thee, my soul. Yea, faith constrains me, to love my Deliverer, and my Saviour. And then will this love (predominating in my heart) be sure to produce the fear of God in my life. For what, in the world, so careful as love, to please ? What so tender and cautious, as love, of injuring or abusing the beloved ?

I cannot, indeed, love a condemning God, an avenging Judge : till such time, as I perceive him (in his dear Son) reconciled : and come to look upon him, as my God, and Father ; but then is my heart drawn out, and joined to him : and then shall I dread every cause of the sad breach with him. Being once brought to believe the love that he has for me ; nothing so transports and affects me : nothing so wins and secures me. There is no standing it out against such prevailing charms and powers of love. But thus I come then to reason with myself, O what shall I render to the Lord ? Shall I continue in sin, that his grace may abound ? God forbid. There is
forgiveness

forgiveness with him ; not that he may be slighted, but feared. And after this manner do I learn, what it is, to “ fear and tremble before the Lord, even “ for all his goodness,” Jer. xxxiii. 9. Instead of trespassing more boldly upon him, the kinder usage I have from him, or venturing to do wickedly, because of the mercy that brings me off so easily ; I am under the greater concern to carry dutifully towards him, as having been so obliged by him, and more afraid of doing any thing to offend and lose him.

And thus to fear a forgiving God, a merciful Father, a bountiful donor, arises from the sweet spring of a dear love, and the thankful sense of an unspeakable obligation : which both captivates the heart, and at the same time, works by that fear, which is the soul’s preservative ; to keep it from so losing all, as to fall into mischief and ruin.

See then here, my soul, how ignorant is their fright, who stand off from the fear of God, lest it should grind too hard upon the comfort of their lives ; to set them on the rack, and keep them in pain, even all their days. For what is this indeed, but to be afraid of the best friend, who (coming to them, and being received by them) would make all well, and full of peace, and sweet satisfaction with them ? When as “ his soul shall dwell at ease, that “ fears the Lord,” Psal. xxv. 13. O who can express his ease all over, that is fled from the wrath to come, and got safe into the hands of his Saviour, and there resolved to abide, out of all destructive danger ? For that love of God, which he feels working in him, gives him also the sure persuasion, that God has first loved him. And his conscientious fear of offending the Lord, confirms him that he loves God, “ not only in word and tongue, but in “ deed and in truth.” And so, may he rest assured, “ that nothing shall ever be able to separate him

“ from the love of God ; which is in Christ Jesus
 “ our Lord.” O what epicure then, what man of
 pleasure, can ever shew me such a rich inside, such
 a well-composed mind, such a serene breast, and
 lightsome heart ; as is possessed and enjoyed, even
 by the poorest man in the world, that fears the Lord
 his God : and keeping fair with him, and living in
 his favour, stands sure for his kingdom ; to be there
 most blessed for ever ?

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** BLESSED GOD, the gracious Giver of all
 “ good ! give me a heart more sensible of thy
 “ mercy to me, and all the loving kindness which
 “ thou hast shewed me. And put thy fear into my
 “ heart ; to make me ever tender and afraid, of
 “ abusing such wonderful patience and goodness, as
 “ I have found. Yea, reconcile me to that fear of
 “ the Lord, which is the way of my peace and ease ;
 “ to be secure from danger, and happy for ever.
 “ O let me believe thy love to me : and let my
 “ faith work by love to my Lord ; that has done
 “ so great things for me. Yea, let my fear also be
 “ the effect of my love ; to keep me from every
 “ thing injurious and provoking in thy sight : that
 “ so, I may approve myself, in all my life, and in
 “ my very heart, pleasing to my God through Je-
 “ sus Christ.”

MEDITATION XCIV.

Of the Love that casts out fear.

SUCH a fear there is, my soul, with which I must not think of parting! because, without it, there can be no happy living. Even that reverential fear of God, which is very consistent with his dearest love. Nay, when it is the love of one, that is infinitely my superior: can I abide to think of being rude and saucy with the most high and glorious Majesty? Though (it is true) we may have a warmer affection for some kind and excellent person that is much above us, than for others that are on the same level with us; yet, do we not think it fit to abuse the encouragement and familiarity allowed us; so as to treat them with disrespect and contempt, that are so condescending, and good to us: nor so forget ourselves, as to run into an offensive boldness with them, because we have found such extraordinary favour from them. No person in the world, so fearful of making false steps as the hearty lover; and none so dreads the rupture, as he, whose love is his very life: who looks upon all unkindness of his beloved, even as the shadow of death. Now such a one's fear of God, does him the greatest kindness, to prevent his greatest danger: which is the loss of his God, and his soul. And when I do so fear; to sin against the Lord; that is the strong ligament, to secure me to him; and to save me from that most fearful thing, to be cast away for ever from him. The most perfect love of God then, never casts out
this

this fear ; but the more perfectly I do love my God, the more tenderly shall I avoid every thing that endangers my loss of him, and of all my satisfaction and consolation, which lies in him. So that I may nevertheless delight in him, when I am afraid to sin against him. For his dear love will fill me with such holy fear, of incurring his heavy wrath.

But then, my soul, beware of another fear, which love will not suffer to dwell in the child of God, *i. e.* The fear which puts me in pain, to think of one so terrible to me, that has an absolute power over me, and no mercy for me ; yea, makes me shrink from him, and even abhor to come near him. To be rid of such a fear, O what sweet ease will it give me ? What great good will it do me ? And what like love, to deliver me from this dread, both by cleansing my soul, and increasing my faith ? For can I endure to lie in the filth of sin, when I love the Lord in my heart ! Sure, I shall carry better to my dearest friend, than offer him such injury and affront. Thus will love help me out of my sins, and so set me above my fears. And when faithful in the covenant of God, then do I “ draw nigh with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.” Yea, though I am again overtaken with faults ; yet do I believe better of the God of love, than that he will, for every offence, cast off any child of his. And when I consider, but whose I am : I do not deject myself with frights of being turned out, and put to the worst, as oft as I have done amiss.

Thus faith breeds my love ; and then love corroborates my faith. Those sweet apprehensions which I have of God’s inclinations to be favourable to me, engage my heart to him, and raise my expectations from him. Yea, the belief of his love even constrains me to love him, who has first loved me. And that which I have no reason to disbelieve why should I not believe ? Tho’ the reasons arise not at all from myself ;

myself; yet shall not that dishearten my faith: because I am not to look for the motives of God's love founded in any of my deserts: when I know the spring of all to be in himself. And it is not the invitation that he has from me, but the pleasure that he takes in extending his own grace, which puts him upon the kindness to me. I will believe his Word then, that he is *love*. And shall I not also believe my own experience; when so much of it I myself have found? yea, when the very greatness of my sins does but illustrate the riches of his grace, to superabound over all such abounding iniquity; shall I not take notice of it to his praise, and to thy encouragement, O my soul? Yes, I will think most highly and comfortably of that love, which is so vast and infinite, beyond all that I am able to conceive. I will admire, and adore, and love the God of love: and still believe such great and good things of him, till my love has conquered my dread; and brought me to delight myself in the Lord, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THE PRAYER.

“ **A**ND give me, O LORD, my GOD, such
 “ a reverential and obediential fear, that I
 “ may stand in awe of thy Majesty; and be afraid
 “ of abusing thy mercy. Yea, give me such a dear
 “ and perfect love, as may rid my mind of all
 “ vile tormenting dread, and preserve and train me
 “ up in the holy fear of offending and losing my
 “ God. O cleanse me from all those filthy sins,
 “ which bred my galling fears. And so increase my
 “ faith, that it may embolden my love; and that so
 “ believing and delighting in thee, I may not fear
 “ to be disowned and rejected by thee; but may
 “ have confidence towards God, and joy in thee,
 “ through my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XCV.

Of Love made perfect.

GLORIOUS things are spoken of thee, O thou love of God! what in all the world, more sweet and great, even resembling heaven; yea, describing the very state of bliss; than to be made perfect in love! but, O my soul, how little can I find of that whereof I hear so much! how little have I loved, yea, how wickedly slighted my God! I am ashamed of it; I desire to be humbled for it. O when am I like to be perfected in love! or is there any such thing to be attained in this life? Surely not in the utmost and best importance of that accomplishment. For how can I be absolutely perfect in love; till my soul shall be so perfect in heaven: till I am freed from every thing sinful, and all that is imperfect be done away? Only that glorious condition of comprehension, has the perfection, in which nothing is lacking, and to which nothing can be added, ever to make it more compleat. Yet such a perfection does Holy Scripture mention at which I may arrive; even in the present earthly condition, *i. e.* The perfection which endues me with every grace in its truth, though not with any one in the height; and makes me carry a conscientious respect to all the commands of my Lord; yea, a constant aim and endeavour, after such a conformity with my heavenly Father; as I shall come quite up to hereafter; though I cannot here: and gives me the integrity of parts; with a laudable advance
above

above many others, a fulness of growth, to equal any spirits in glory, that are made perfect altogether. As a child has all the parts of a man; and in that respect, is a perfect man: though far from the perfection of bulk and might: nor at all sufficient for the services which a man full grown, easily perform; so may I have all grace in some degree, and in sincerity: though none at all, but in minority, and some debility. And so perfect may be my love, as this frail state will admit: not without any defect or want; but without guile and fraud. And thus it is, my soul, I do make conscience, of living, according to the gospel; and prefer my Lord before every rival: not daring to go on in any forbidden path; nor offering to meddle with the thing, for which his Word gives me no warrant. For this is the love of God, so to keep his commands, and to shew my love, by observing his will. Love being all for pleasing, is not so much to be seen in transport of passion, as in care of the conversation, 1 John ii. 5. "Whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." So that, when I am turned over to a holy course; and have got a habit of virtue and well-doing, and become so fixed and established, that nothing shall put me out of the better way, where the grace of God has set me; with which I am so in love, as to make it the pleasure of my life: then is my love without dissimulation; and that, will my gracious Lord be pleased to interpret, for its perfection. And when I press through all the good of this world, as a poor barren desert, in pursuance of the supreme eternal good: and make light, and think scorn of every thing, as a wretched idol, that would take me off, the altogether lovely, and blessed for ever: then is my love so right and worthy, as is grown to some fair degree and maturity, and such as will be my preservative against every temptation, that would endanger my salvation.

tion. For whatever here allures me, then do I see that elsewhere, which is far finer and greater, sweeter and better; yea, that, compared with which the most inviting things of this world, are but shining bubbles, glittering toys, golden dreams, mere delusions, and empty nothings, that disappear and vanish, or go all into blackness and deformity: whenever he that is all beauty and sweetness, love and goodness, is presented before the eyes of my mind, calling for my heart, to be loved with all my soul.

Here then is love, in its present perfection; looking the creatures even into nothing, that God may be to me all in all. This is the perfection feasible, which is my duty here. But what is above this, is to me now possible; and must be only my desire, for hereafter. Yet in the gospel computation, then am I made perfect in love, when my faith works by love; and my love shews itself, in my care and endeavour, to obey and please the Lord. Though I love him not with a love so fervent and entire, as he is worthy of, and as I have reason for; but some affections still are leaking out into bye-channels; yet if the main stream do run God and heavenward; and he so presides in my soul, that every thing else comes behind: thus am I come to such perfection in his love, as he will mercifully accept at my hands: and then number me among his lovers, and take me for his beloved, notwithstanding many defects and failings. His love will cover a multitude of my faults, when indeed he so has my heart; that, for all things else, I love, as if I did not love them.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** LORD, my GOD, my soul's only rest and
 “ chiefest good! it is life eternal to know
 “ thee: it is heaven upon earth to love thee; and
 “ the consummation of all bliss to enjoy thee. Give
 “ me,

“ me, I beseech thee, an understanding to know
 “ thee, and a heart to love thee; and that greatest
 “ of all gifts, to obtain the everlasting enjoyment
 “ of thee. O work and raise me, Lord, to such
 “ a height and perfection of love, as here I am
 “ capable of: and grant me the grace of thy Holy
 “ Spirit, and such power from on high, that I may
 “ so perfectly love thee, as evermore to prefer thee,
 “ and long after thee, and delight in thee, and study
 “ and strive in all things to please thee; through thy
 “ chiefly beloved, my only Saviour. Amen.”

MEDITATION XCVI.

Of the unpleasing part of the Minister's Work.

TO rebuke sharply, and speak not only bitter truth but terror; yea, to cry aloud, and let fly, like a Son of thunder: to preach, not only without profit, but to the hurt of careless souls; to be the favour of death to a perverse, gainsaying people, and preach them out of all excuses, into an aggravated wickedness, and the heaviest condemnation: this cannot be an office so grievous to the obnoxious sinner, but it must needs be as grating to the conscientious Minister. He does it; not because he loves the cutting, killing work; but as the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, that dares not refuse the charge, nor transgress the instructions given; and that must not betray his trust, and the souls, whose care he has undertaken.

O my soul! How glad should I be, to prove a messenger for good, to every soul that hears me? What is more, than their salvation, desired by me? What could be more pleasing to me? Yet, to please them, is not all my work: and to ingratiate myself with them, should not be all my care. No, I must not speak peace, where the Lord hath not spoken it, nor handle the Word of God deceitfully, that I myself might be treated courteously; nor strengthen the hands of the wicked, by promising him that life, which I cannot warrant. Where faithfulness and boldness is required, it is not to fear men, in the cause of God; nor to fawn upon such, as his Word condemns. Though I a sinner, who stand in the greatest need of favour, should ever be the most tender, of running into any needless rigour; yet cannot but dread the woe, against such as sew pillows under all arm-holes, and dawb with untempered mortar. Sure the chirurgeon cannot take pleasure, to probe, and lance, cut, and scarify; and yet does the care of his patient's safety and welfare, sometimes put him upon the methods, that look so sharp and severe. Thus do I find it my obligation, though none of my satisfaction, to afflict and sadden the souls in danger, that need to be told, how bad it is with them: (if possible) to prevent the ruin coming upon them. And look it never so rude; it will prove exceeding kind: to rouse them out of a swoon; and to pluck them out of the fire.

I cannot say, that God's Word will leave a people as it found them: and that where they are never the better for it, they will be never the worse: for though the Word is not at all the worse; that does them no good: yet are they a great deal the worse, who enjoy the benefit of it; and continue still blind and hard under it: and are not to be wrought upon by it. It is the two-edged sword, that will kill the
soul,

soul, where it cuts not off the lusts. And what is only healing, in its own nature; yet may the obdurate make it killing to themselves. But that they may not come to curse the time, that ever they had the means of grace; and wish with all their hearts, to change places, even with Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah; yea, that they may not come to curse the blind guides, that could not see what was coming, and would not give them timely warning: it is mercy to their souls, as well as care of thee, my own; to speak sometimes, what may not very well please them to hear: and to make good the parallel, between ministers of the church, and the salt of the earth; which pierces to fetch out noxious humours; and, like the masters of assemblies, that fasten their nails; to stick as thorns in the sides of guilty sinners. For here, to be superficial and easy; is rather to demolish than edify the church: and where we should terrify men out of their damning sins; it is to conduct souls smoothly down to everlasting misery. Yea, to bring the blood of those whom we do not so warn, upon our own heads. Let me not then, my soul, shrink at the trouble, to which I may put myself or others, in coming home close to them; and dealing impartially with them; but may they rather now complain of me, for my severity, than hereafter, that I was so flighty; and did the work of the Lord so negligently. Yea, let me bear all the cry of their tongues here; rather than the cry of their consciences for ever. And let me be spighted as their enemy, for pricking them at the heart: so that I may but be, indeed God's instrument, to save their souls.

THE PRAYER.

“ **O** Thou that hast called me, to preach thy
 “ Word, give me courage and fidelity ; to
 “ speak it boldly, and conscientiously, as I ought
 “ to speak : not as seeking to please men, but God,
 “ who searches my heart. Help me, Lord, to per-
 “ form, even the unwelcome works of my place ;
 “ with acceptance in thy sight. That I may deal
 “ freely, and discharge my trust, in coming home
 “ (as far as I can discern) to every soul’s necessity ;
 “ that if I must have the ill-will of some in this
 “ world, I may not have the curses of any in the
 “ next ; but may help to rescue even the souls of
 “ those that take offence, to rescue them from the
 “ jaws of hell ; and to speed them on, to thy ever-
 “ lasting heavenly kingdom. Amen.”

 MEDITATION XC VII.

The Minister’s reflection on his own failings.

THE treasure of that gospel which I preach, it is
 more precious than gold ; but the vessel in
 which I have it, that (alas) is no better than earth.
 And though my office entitle me to the name of an
Ambassador for Christ, and a steward of the mysteries
 of God ; yet is my frame but of the common clay,
 whence all mortals do derive. And O that I were
 not pulled down with that sinful infirmity, which is
 far worse than all the natural frailty ! to make me
 discredit

discredit the truth, which I preach, and transgress the rules which I give; and thus offer me too much cause to fear, lest such foul errors, should spoil all the good success even of my best labours, and cast such a blame on the ministry, and throw such rubs in the way of sinners conversion; as to stop them out of heaven, instead of helping them thither.

O my soul! is not this enough, to humble me low in the very dust before the Lord? I am abashed at that, which so preaches to me all humility; but yet it must not sink me down into a hopeless despondency; as long as I have to do with such a Lord, who is also my Father; and knows my frame, and considers my frailty, and will bear with me; and mitigate judgment in favour of me; where men aggravate all against me; and so forget themselves, as well as me, to expect impossibilities from me; even that one of the like passions and imperfections with themselves, should be impeccable; and act above the capacity of that lapsed nature; which he has in common with the rest. He that employs me, will kindlier deal by me; and be more indulgent to me: while I lie under none but the ordinary defects; incident to such earthen vessels, and he sees that I design his glory; and to make good proof of my ministry: doing as I can; where I cannot do as I would.

And O that I may not be a vessel worse than of earth! though weak and vile as the earth, that I may not be hard and unrelenting, as the stones, under my sins! that those sins may not be either presumptuous or scandalous; but only such as are common even to them, who (in the main) are faithful; who yet, in many things offend all. That I may tremble as the earth; and feel and bewail whatever is amiss; and not allow it! but strive still to amend it! that I may not go off my watch; and lie down to sleep; and take my ease, with the slothful

ful servant; and from a labourer, turn loiterer in the Lord's vineyard; nor make his people transgress, by running before them, into such wicked liberties; where it would be at their peril, to follow! that I may never give them poison for meat, nor stones for bread, and scorpions for fish! (what is likelier to starve and ruin, than to feed and save them.) And then, though I tell the bitter truths, which cannot be borne, and touch sore places, and hit darling lusts, and follow truth so close at the heels, till the guilty recalcitrate and shew their extreme aversion to any humiliation or conversion: this is but an offence taken, where it was not given; and the worst return made, where the greatest kindness was offered. How can I then reckon such matters of their exceptions among my transgressions? Yet still too many (alas) have I besides, that press hard upon me, and are too heavy for me. O when shall it be better with me! that my own follies and miscarriages, may not so reproach and upbraid me! that so clear I may stand from these sore encumbrances of my way, as to run with less uneasiness, and with more refreshment, in the race set before me!

THE PRAYER.

“GRACIOUS GOD! who art pleased to deal
 “with poor frail men, after the manner of
 “men; and to send thy holy eternal truth, and the
 “word of their salvation to them, by such messen-
 “gers as are liable to the same infirmities with
 “themselves: O let not thy Word suffer reproach,
 “nor fail of the happy success, through the defects
 “and failings of thy servants. But help me, Lord,
 “so to dispense thy Word, and to carry in my life,
 “that I may not give just offence to any observers,
 “but promote the edification and salvation of all
 “my

“ my hearers. O preserve me from open scandals,
 “ and raise me still higher above the common mis-
 “ carriages; and (according as my present, imper-
 “ fect state, will allow) make me so accomplished,
 “ that I may cast no blemish upon my office, but
 “ in all things, glorify my God, through Jesus
 “ Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION XCVIII.

On the sight of my coffin.

THIS poor little cabin, that for so many years I have had before my eyes; O what a quickening text is it; upon which thou hast the occasion to preach a funeral sermon, my soul? Itself indeed, is my monitor, and preaches by such dumb signs, as point me to my close confinement, in the end of my days. Here I have kept it by me, to familiarize the thoughts of mortality to my mind, that the remembrance of such narrow bounds, in my death, might help to keep me within better compass, all my life. And now, that the commonness of the spectacle, may not render it too familiar, so as to destroy the design, which thus I thought to promote, I must not content myself, just transiently to view it, but in the deepest seriousness ponder upon it: to consider, what a diminutive creature I am, that was once cribbed up in my mother's womb, not a foot long at first; and shall, ere long, be shut up in this black box, taking up but six foot at the last. Yea, to consider, how vile is that body, which I cherish, with such concern and curiosity; that a while since, lay

lay within the bowels of a frail woman : and a while hence, will turn to a heap of putrefaction, within the enclosure of these perishing boards ; and go all to rottenness and dust, even before them.

Now do I use it as a little wardrobe, where I hang the apparel that clothes my body ; but shortly will it be the chest, to hold that body itself, which is the garment wherewith thou art clad, my soul. That body, which has now its liberty, not only of the house and all the rooms, but of all the grounds, and all the country : that body, which cannot be satisfied, to keep within the domestic circuit ; but is often for expatiating and journeying abroad, to seek rest in motion, and to give me ease, even in taking of such trouble : to divert me with shifting scenes, and gratify me with that pleasing vanity, of telling, how far I have been, and what places I have seen : it will ere long, have done with every journey, and be debarred of all the liberty : such a prisoner, laid up within these wooden walls ; as is never to stir, so much as hand or foot, till the last jail-delivery, when summoned to appear before my eternal Judge.

As yet, I may knock at the door, and find the house empty ; but after some few removes more (I know not how soon) I shall fill it, and make it my dwelling-place, where I must set up my rest ; and under the earth, am like to find a longer abode, than ever I did in any house upon it. And then, whoever calls ; never shall I take any notice, till the last call that shall quicken the dead, and awake them that sleep in the dust.

And what, but such as this, is the small cote, that must hold the farthest traveller, the biggest lord, the highest monarch ? He that has been never so active in the world ; he that has possessed never so large a tract of land ; yea, he that has bore rule over the mightiest kingdoms upon earth, must be contented,
after

after all, to take up, and house in so close a nest: Such as is the house appointed for all living: a house but just big enough to hold them: and yet no bigger will be the allowance of that man, who was for joining house to house, and field to field; and never could be satisfied; how much soever of the world he had gained; but was aiming still at more enlargements, or more preferments. No finer will be the house, nor any thing more commodious the habitation of him, that was for erecting the most magnificent piles; and for making his house still more great and glorious, within a few boards, must his corpse be fastened up, to lie in a dark hole, under ground, till it become a part of that earth, out of which it was taken.

O my soul! what a check is this, to aspiring thoughts, and covetous projects? What a slur to the pleasures of the flesh, and all the pomp and splendour of the world? Let me look to my coffin, and learn to be humble and heavenly, and weaned from this world, and all in care for a better. That this crib may not prove the jail to secure me for execution, but only a sleeping place, till my vile shall be changed into a glorious body, and raised up from lying in the dust of the earth, to shine and reign for ever in the kingdom of my Father.

THE PRAYER.

“ **T**HIS coffin, intended for the case of my dead
 “ body, will be dead to any good instruction;
 “ that it can give my soul; if thou, O LORD,
 “ do not render it so useful; and teach me, to
 “ make my benefit of such objects, that they may
 “ quicken and engage me, to do as thy Word com-
 “ mands me. Yea, if I give not heed to thy Word;
 “ neither should I be persuaded, though one came
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“ to me from the dead. O my God, bless all the
 “ remembrances before me, to work still some fur-
 “ ther good upon me. And let this receptacle, that
 “ waits to take in my unweildy flesh (after thou
 “ hast called away the vital part) not only admo-
 “ nish me of my present frailty and mortality, but
 “ also excite my utmost activity, the better to pro-
 “ vide for my future immortality, and for thy ever-
 “ lasting glory. Amen.”

MEDITATION XCIX.

For the Morning.

O My soul! now has the morning opened a door, to release me out of night's dungeon, into the light and liberty of another day; yea, brought me, from a kind of death, to enjoy the benefit of a renewed life. For am I not got out of my bed, even like one raised up from the dead? I was overwhelmed with sleep, as if I had been buried in the grave; and, for the time, lay as dead, to myself and to the world. And there might I have lain on, and not awaked, till roused with the last trump, to hold up my hand, at the tribunal of God: if the Lord of my life (whose wakeful eye was open upon me, while mine were closed, and who kept me, when I had no power to look to myself) had not again restored me to myself, and put me in a capacity to go on with my offices afresh. But still do I find my great Preserver with me; and every moment, does he uphold me; and much more frequent than mornings go over me, are his mercies still descending

ceding upon me. Now has he offered new matter of thanks to my heart ; and now also does he put a new price into my hands, another day, not only to enjoy the comforts of this life, but further to ensure the glories of a better.

O my soul ! what shall I do this day, worth the precious time, which Heaven's bounty is pleased to allow me ? Shall I not live to him, without whom I could not live at all ? Shall I not mind my needful duty, while I have so fair opportunity ? And shall I not strive now, to get a day's journey, nearer to a blessed eternity ? O let me do some such good this day, that I may not, at night, complain, I have lost the day ! still is the wheel of time turning round, to spin out the thread of my life ; and, O how little a time will it be, till I shall see the end ? Till I shall count no more, by evenings and mornings, nor ever live a day again in this world ? yea, how do I know but this very day, may be the last ? It is certainly my wisdom so to reckon and carry, that it may not prove my loss and grief, but my gain and joy, should it so fall out. It is no right numbering of my days, when I only keep count, how many I have lived ; if I am not much affected with the patience, that, time after time, so lengthens out my life ; and if I do not take care still to become better, as I grow older ; that every day may not leave me as it found me, that the sun which before saw such folly, or such filthiness in me, may not rise again, to be witness of the same, or as bad, committed by me ; but find some further amendment still wrought upon me ; more grace in my heart, and better fruits in my life. I see, what good will the addition of more days to my life do me !

Now am I going into a world that is little friendly to thee, my soul ; but even business and vacation, pleasures and crosses, company and solitude, all have their snares ; so that never, any where, must I be
off

off my watch and guard; but beware lest any thing so engulph or divert me, that I forget my God, my soul, my present mortality, and my future eternity; the work that I have to do here, and the account that I must make hereafter, whatever else calls for my attendance, still lie the chief of all my concerns, with God; and in nothing can I hope for a blessing, when I am out of his keeping. If I have not him propitious to me, and looking with favour upon me; O what good will my life do me! even the sweetest things are nauseous, and the best successes in the world cannot make me joyful at the bottom, if God be not both present and pleased. My eyes then must be ever towards the Lord; and upon him must I wait all the day long. Thus shall I spend my days with profit to thee, my soul; and find that to be a good, comfortable day, which will leave me easy and chearful at night, and at better rest in my mind, than any that my body can find in my bed.

THE PRAYER.

“**B**Y thy favour, LORD, I have in safety and comfort passed the night, and come to see the light of this new day. O thou that hast brought me to it, be pleased to direct, and assist, and bless, and prosper me in it. For a sorry guide and keeper am I, of myself; that dare not depend upon my own conduct, or my own power, to steer my course, to discharge my place, to do any good, or command any success. O my God, be thou my preserver, my teacher, my helper: and let me be safe in thy hands, instructed in thy ways, mindful of thy presence; secured from rebelling against thy Word; inclined to observe thy will: and enabled to do that which is good in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

MEDITATION C.

For the Evening.

O My soul ! with what a grateful variety, do the constant interchanges of day and night checker our lives ! when the dark curtains of night are drawn open ; then are we glad to see the fresh light of a new day. And after we have taken our rest by night, then we grow weary of our beds ; and get out, as released prisoners, taking a pleasure, again to fall to our pains ; and the very business of the day is diverting, after we have been shut up under the duration of night. We go then about our employments, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. But at last the pleasure becomes a toil : we begin to be tired with bearing the burthen of the day, we feel the need of a recruit, and long for the night to return again, and come to give us our discharge. Then is it our delight, as well as desire, to go and hide again under that black canopy, to sequester ourselves, and lie down to seek repose, that we may so sleep away our fatigues and our cares. Thus has he, who knows our frame, provided for our need, and also for our ease, to make both light and darkness (in their several turns) even one as welcome to us as the other. O my soul ! how good do we find our God, even here in the house of our pilgrimage ? And under the very imperfection of our present condition, how well does he use us ? How seasonably relieve us ? His mercy and his bounty have I not largely experienced this day, and all the days of my life ?
Never

Never is the Lord unmindful of me : never does he leave off to do for me, even though I do so often forget him, and live so much in the world without him.

O what have I done this day ; to answer the care and kindness of Heaven : and to shew myself sensible and thankful, under all the repeated engagements laid upon me ? When so much more good than evil, I have received at the Lord's hands ; yet, alas, how much more evil than good have I done in his sight ? Here, my soul, I am to make a review, and take a survey of my day's work ; but, O how little can I see, that does not fly with reproach in my face, and recoil with trouble upon my mind ! duties neglected, or so done as if not performed, idleness and vanities, faults and follies, failings and miscarriages : these make up even the sum total of all the account. Never, never do I want matter for repentance : O that I may not want a heart suited to the needful service !

This day now is gone ; but has it brought me any nearer to God and heaven ? My soul ! has it not thrown me back, or left me but where I was ? O do not my scores grow with my days ? And the longer I live on, have I not still the more to account for ? O then how heavy will be the reckoning, when after all my days, I shall come to the day of the Lord ? For here my days are but a certain number ; yea, so small a number that soon will the account be up, when I shall come to seek the last. And as now, this day is gone, so yet a little while, and all will be gone. But then will the enquiry be, how I have spent them, and what I have done in them ; while I had them ? And dost thou not tremble, my soul, to think of the doom, should the Lord enter into judgment with me, according to every day's work that I have done ?

O may

O may I often be considering, how few are my days: how fast they come and go: how quickly there will be an end of them all; and what a dreadful plight I shall be in, if my last day come and find me unprovided to give up my last accounts. So then let me reckon with myself in the evening of every day, that I may find the Lord's reckoning the easier with me, in the close of all my days. At night let me call to mind the sins of the day, and humble myself; and let me also call to mind the mercies of the day, and be thankful to my God. By night on my bed, let me seek him, whom my soul loveth. Instead of devising mischief on my bed, let me spend my waking time in communion with my God, and remember him on my bed, and meditate on him in the night-watches: taking advantage of that solitude, to promote the more serious thoughtfulness of what concerns me for ever. Let me look upon my sleep and my bed, as the emblems of my death and my grave. For as I now take leave of my company, and go to my chamber and my rest; so must I shortly take my leave of the world, and go to the chambers of death, and lie down in the dust of the earth. O that I may so remember it, and every day take care, to get and keep in a fitness for it, that when all my days here are done, I may go to my God, and spend an infinite eternity in his heavenly joy and glory.

THE PRAYER.

“ ETERNAL, glorious GOD! thou Ancient
 “ of days, whose years shall never fail, nor any
 “ change come, to make thee other than thou art,
 “ even most perfectly blessed! my times are in thy
 “ hands; and thou art my life, and the length of
 “ my

“ my days. They are wearing off, and fly away;
“ and how soon will they all be extinct, and cease
“ to be any more! there is the evening of my life,
“ as well as the evening of this day; and how near
“ it may be to me, O Lord, thou knowest. Make
“ me (I beseech thee) so mindful of it, and so ready
“ for it, that I may meet it with hope and comfort,
“ and go sleep in Jesus with as much inclination
“ and desire, in the close of my life, as I go to sleep
“ in my bed, when weary at night. O my God!
“ give me repentance for the sins, and thankfulness
“ for the mercies of this day, and of all my days.
“ Be also watchful over me, and good to me this
“ this night. O let me be thy care, now and ever-
“ more; and to glorify and please thee, let it be my
“ care in every state and case, and as long as I have
“ a day to live. Amen, Amen.”

POST:

P O S T S C R I P T,

Containing

A SUPERADDED

M E D I T A T I O N

O N T H E

Sad Spoils and Ruins made by the dreadful
T E M P E S T, November 27, 1703.

AFTER I have brought this Century now to an end; yet must not I withstand an impulse that excites me again to begin: since the hand of God himself has reached out an occasion so uncommon (exceeding not only all present memory, but even all former history) as will hardly suffer any one that hears of it, to forbear some reflexion upon it: when that best as well as greatest hand, which so often has done wonderful things for us, has in such an amazing manner, been stretched out against us; to forgive us melancholly fears, lest the only Friend on whom we lean our main dependence, shall be-

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come

come such an enemy, as will no more espouse the cause of a people, so vile and unworthy; but make us know the height of his displeasure at us, by the strange and terrible ways of his afflicting us.

For he that brings the winds out of his treasures (Psal. cxxxv. 7.) and can make the vapours as well as stars, in their courses, to fight from heaven; and can break the ships of England, with a west wind, as well as the ships of Tarshish with that of the east; he that commands and raises the stormy wind, and (though we know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes) so instructs it in its errand, as to fulfil his Word; and he that can make the air (which is so thin, it escapes the most penetrating eye, yet) when driven with the blast of the breath of his nostrils, so robust and irresistible, as to shatter in pieces the habitations founded on the earth, as well as those wooden castles floating on the waters; yea, to discover the channels of the water, and the very foundations of the earth, Psal. xviii. 15. (So stripping nature herself bare, even to nakedness) and further yet, he that can make that element, which (of itself) is weak even to a proverb, yet (when empowered from on high) too strong for all the armed force upon earth; he, even he, has arose to judgment, and revealed his wrath from heaven, to rouse the drowsy nation, cast asleep in a sinful lethargy, and dreaming of nothing but safety, or distant foes, kept off from our isle, by the wide mote of those seas, that surround us on every side.

And (when we would not be awakened by the clashing of arms abroad, and the concussion of foreign nations, dashing one against another) even in a moment, has the great Lord of Hosts, opened a scene of war within ourselves; and in the most close and sharp engagement from above (for many hours together) with his mighty wind-guns (the roaring
cannon,

cannon, the flying squadron, and amazing artillery of Heaven) attacked and bombarded us, in more than a thousand places at once, both by sea and land. Not unlike the assault of those judgments, described Joel ii. before which, it was said the earth should tremble, and all faces gather blackness; when they traversed to and fro, about the city, and ran upon the wall, and climbed the houses, and entered in at the windows; so did this stupendous scourge in the air (that rod of God, laying on, to make itself heard far and near, in a dreadful sound; and quite out-doing all the violences that sometimes happen to nature; which use not to last long, nor to reach far) it took its solemn time, to plead the cause of its Lord; and its vast compass also, to travel all over the land, even from one side to the other: nor counting that enough, from thence rushed on, in its precipitant course, through the deep; and beyond that also, to lash and tear other lands, with a rage as fierce, even towards the end, as if then but newly begun. And every where it came, making that fearful devastation, which was not only to the sorrowful loss of thousands of lives, but to the hurt and damage of vessels, houses and goods, even inestimable.

Now, such a messenger, dispatched immediately from heaven, leaves here no room at all, for the usual suspicion of any treachery or incendiary; but plainly speaks itself to be the herald at arms that was dispatched on the Lord's errand. And then (my soul) how loudly does it alarm us all, to mind and make another sort of preparation, than what is commonly making, among us, to meet a more formidable foe, than all the biggest enemies on earth? One that has not only them and us, but every creature above and below at command; presently to do (by them) what execution soever he will upon us: and can as easily spread far wider than the sphere of
its

its late activity, that calamity, which fell upon some, for the warning of others; yea, can soon make the judgment, which immediately touched but a part, universal upon all the land: even to lay us waste, and give up all for a prey, to them that seek both our blood and our place.

And will not this now awaken dormant guilt, and make the conscious breasts to tremble?

“ Tempestuous times,

“ Amaze poor mortals, and object their crimes.” Herb.

When the judgments of God are in the earth, the inhabitants of the land will (they should) learn righteousness, Isa. xxvi. 9. Then, if ever, sure, they will recoil on themselves, and repent of their sins, and turn to him that smites them: when he preaches so home to them; and not only knocks at the doors, but breaks into the houses, to make search after his offenders.

And (O my soul) who knows the power of his anger? When it is the fierceness of the wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD, Rev. xix. 15. And when Omnipotence itself will shew what it can do, so far beyond all that any creatures are able to inflict. Yea, who knows the extent of that wrath gone out from the Lord? How soon the storm, which he has bid, “Peace, be still,” may receive a new commission, to re-assume and exert all its strength, and make the mighty besom of destruction, to sweep yet cleaner and further? And then, how much better to have all the world, and a thousand worlds against us, than one God Almighty for our enemy!

But thus is he pleased to single out here and there a victim, for that just indignation to come and apprehend; which will light also upon the obnoxious, that do escape at present; and (if they be not turned and reconciled to God) make them all equal sharers

Sharers with their suffering neighbours: when the whole magazine, out of which these arrows now do fly abroad, shall be broken up. And though it seem now great severity on them that so do fall; yet, O what abundant mercy will it be on them that stand, if they be not only for the present a little startled, but effectually changed, by that fearful work which they see these executioners of Heaven make upon others!

However then the judgments be no such lotteries and accidents, as do casually light upon any individuals, without direction of an over-ruling hand; yet, never let me imagine, my soul! but that the justice of Heaven might have sent the very same on myself, and the rest that are spared. And why might not we have been the woful examples, and they the joyful survivors? O how far should it be from us, to count them sinners above all others, that have been such sufferers? To take upon us the judging of those judgments, which are a great deep, not to be fathomed by us; or to compute our goodness, by our immunity from such evils, and content ourselves with invectives against the wicked nation at large; and thus hope to escape in the crowd, without ever criticising on the particular miscarriages lying on our own score! Instead of this, haste to censure others, O how much better will it become us (as it does behove us) to think, that many better than we have fallen; and yet stand, not to be high-minded, but fear, lest we also fall! when still we carry in us, matter enough, and too much (God knows) of that offence, for which divine justice may at any time, catch hold of us. And the swearing and drunkenness, the lewdness and profaneness, the notorious unrighteousness and daring ungodliness, which have cost many so dear already, may they not prove yet as chargeable and destructive to us, if still patronized and abetted by us? If we will not cease

to

to be so wicked, what reason for us then to presume, but that we shall be as wretched? If the sinners at ease, instead of fearing and trembling, continue careles and wanton; and all the sad examples they have seen, and all the terrible warnings given, can do no good of them, nor any arguments or persuasions set home upon their souls, will ever break them off their sins: O may not they justly dread to feel the more of the smart, the less they have been wrought upon by the sweet? And if we will not hear and obey that loud voice, Rev. xiv. 7. "Fear God, and give glory to him: For the hour of his judgment is come:" may not we yet come to fear, so as to be consumed with terrors, when the distress and anguish is upon us? Yea then, may not we feel it to be full as bad, as now we can fear it? And find the previous judgments prove but harbingers to far greater? For judgment there will be without mercy, to the impenitent despisers of mercy. And then, O what warding off the blow, when so God will strike? And what bearing up under the stroke, when so he will lay it on?

But whenever the judgments do come, O my soul, do not we ourselves send for them to us; and pull them down upon our own heads? Do not we provoke the Lord, to pour out his fury? And the very sins, which some can so impudently play with, and the most do commonly make so light of, alas, do not these raise the storm, and kindle all the flame. If we think otherwise, the apostle will undeceive us, Eph. v. 6. "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." What else are those cursed things, which bring it home to us, and even constrain the righteous God so to deal by us? Is it any wonder then, that his hand should find out them that hate him, and are up in rebellion against him? O how marvellous rather

ther should it be in our eyes, that we are not cut off by such plagues? When, alas, our very lives are but too right emblems of the rude and boisterous winds: and we so often do run ourselves even out of breath, in the eager pursuance of our evil ways; and help to put all in disorder, by our extravagant rants, and our bold outrageous sins, that make the foulest havock upon God's honour, the world's peace, and our own souls. Is there not the tempest, no less horrible, (though not so noisy, yet as deadly) in our impetuous lusts and passions, carrying all before them, and no more restrained by the Lord's voice, even than the high winds are by our words? And if the thundering ordinance of God's word will not storm us out of our sins; O how justly then may he storm us out of the world; yea, and turn us (with the wicked) into hell? And thus, they that have still slighted abundance of warnings, may at last go off with very little or no warning: yea, may perish in a rueful surprize; at such a time, as they least thought of any harm.

Now do but imagine, my soul (if imagine thou canst) that mighty consternation, which seized and sunk the spirits of such vast multitudes in city and country, who bore the brunt of that furious hurricane, in all its height and violence. Imagine what a storm this without, did also raise within them: what breaches upon their hearts, together with those upon their houses: when they thought themselves ready to be hurried, not only out of their dwellings, but out of the land of the living. And imagine; (if thou canst reach it,) what a hideous plight the poor mariners were in, when their ships were driven with the fierce winds, and tossed and hurled about, in a rapid agitation, even as quick as thought, over the watery hills and dales: now up to the clouds, and presently down again to the depths, and very sands: the wind driving, the sea raging

raging, the waves roaring, the vessel splitting; till their hearts, for fear, failed them, and all the means and hopes of escape were quite departed from them; how grim, as for a great while together, in that black and dismal night, the king of terrors did stare upon them; to overwhelm them with horror, before swallowed up of the water, and to kill them with many deaths, before the last: and what a loud and lamentable cry they all sent up, in the last moments, (at their wits-end, as well as their lives end,) to pierce the very heavens, and even drown the thundering noise above: when they saw and felt the cargo, just plunging down into the deep, forced, on a sudden, to take their mournful leave of the open air, and of one another, to go and dive into the subterranean world, among the wild inhabitants of that gloomy abyss. No more to be heard of till that general rising at last; when the sea, as well as earth, shall give up its dead. Now, if it even kill my heart, to ponder, O what it must needs do unto theirs, to suffer such an agony, against which there was no manner of remedy! it is a ghastly scene that I will not undertake, in any perfection, to represent: but must leave the rest to astonishment.

But now, my soul, that the Lord has shewed his authority, to stay his rough wind, (Isa. xxvii. 8.) and say to that, as he does to the sea, "hitherto shalt thou go, and no further:" and in mercy has given winds and waves the word, to set them at rest; and so caused a comfortable calm to succeed: shall all the frightful apprehensions of that time be over, even as soon as the danger? Shall our good motions and pious resolutions then raised, be all again laid, together with the storm? Can we so quickly forget the jeopardy we were in, when even distracted with terrors, such as made the ears of the hearers tingle, and the hearts of the sufferers sink as lead?

lead? And shall we so quickly forget the mercy and escape, that we found in that time of need and dread; when our lives were given us and the destroying angel pass'd over us? Nay, when the plague is taken from our coasts, shall the hardness, (like Pharaoh's,) return upon our hearts? And shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy, as if we were stronger than he? And so dare heaven, to break out in a more horrible tempest yet, upon us; and make that last, but the beginning of sorrows to us, when such warnings and prodigies cannot soften and reclaim us?

O how many startling calls, time after time, have we had? And shall they still be calls to the deaf and the dead? God Almighty quicken and rouse us out of that wretched desperate stupidity: that even the dead may come to hear this loud voice, and live! to live in his fear, who (we see) has us all in his hands; and can presently arm any of his creatures against us, to execute his wrath upon us; yea, and make the very elements that preserve us, his officers to destroy us. And then, if God be against us, who can be for us? Or when he will take us in hand, who can deliver us? O may we bethink ourselves, as we ought, of his irresistible power, in a moment, to make houses, heaps; and the fine habitation, a wild desolation: and to shake, not only earth, but also heaven: yea, to kill, and cast us into hell. O may the breakings of dwellings over our heads, help also to break the wicked one's strong holds in our hearts! and the spoiling of our worldly goods, may it so spoil us of our sinful evils, as to storm us off all the wicked ways, which threaten us with a dreadful end: and the ill wind blow us so much good, as that, Exod. x. 19. which carried all the locusts into the sea: that our filthy lusts may thus be carried-off; for which the Lord else will cut us off.

Seeing God will be known by the judgments which he executes: to make us afraid of doing the things, that provoke him so to stretch out his hand; and also to beware of priding, and over-pleasing ourselves, in any the houses or enjoyments here below, so as to make them the lurking-places, where to hide from the Lord above: as if we thought they were to hold us, or we them, for ever: when, alas, so soon there will be the turning out, and all of them must be for ever left. And can we still be carnal and worldly, unconcerned and careless, frolic and jocular, vicious and rebellious; when we have seen so many struck before us; and the rod is shaken, and the judgments hanging over us: which, except we repent, will come, not only to scourge, but ruin us?

Shall we conclude, that now all the peril is past; and idly presume our mountain to stand so strong, as never to be moved? No, not by him, that makes even the pillars of the earth to tremble, and has us all perpetually at his mercy? O may we now learn so much better understanding, as to fall down, and humble ourselves in the very dust, before this great Sovereign of the world; confessing and bewailing our barrenness, our worldliness, and all our wickedness; the woful decay of serious piety, and the monstrous abounding of impudent iniquity among us: that godliness is made a mere scorn, and villainy but a jest; that almost all are for taking deep root in the earth; and so very few do keep up (or so much as understand) any conversation in heaven. O that he, who has broken us in so many places, may yet, in one place more, make a breach upon us; even to break our hardened hearts, and break us off our cursed sins! O may we fling away from us, with abhorrence, the hellish breed-bates, which set the God of heaven against us: that we may not
experience

experience the fearful thing, to fall into his hands; because we would not let go such provoking things out of our hands; nor give heed to his Word, nor be won by his love. But at last, may we attain to more of the wisdom from above; when so schooled and taught to the quick. And if we desire, that he who has torn and smitten, would again heal and bind us up: O may the remembrance of that fearful, tempestuous night, sticking upon us; and the doleful wrecks and spoils it made, yet in sight before us, remaining as the marks of God's high displeasure at us (may they) be our monitors, to make us ever afraid of stirring up yet further wrath against us. That we may not dare to go on fighting against Heaven, in our open impieties; nor fighting with one another, in our spiteful animosities: (while we are all to pieces among ourselves, and yet too much agreeing all, to dishonour and offend the Lord:) but may come to a better temper towards men: and learn a more lowly and holy carriage towards God: that those who have been bruised with his maul, may be indeed humbled in his sight, and wrought to his will: and the rest of us, who have not felt the roll going over us; but have found lives and limbs, houses and goods preserved to us, may (by a sweeter method) be led to repentance; and perceive our hearts (like the flint) broken upon this soft pillow.

And if we would do any thing now to repair the hurt of the daughter of our people, which we bewail; O may we shew ourselves the most zealous promoters of that reformation of manners, which will make us the best contributors to the healing of the land's breaches; and to the keeping off a worse thing yet from coming to us. O may we (upon this occasion) be quickened and brought, with purpose

pose of heart, to devote ourselves unto the Lord, and walk humbly with our God, and wait upon him even continually: that he may not only be fought by us, when he is slaying us, but evermore be remembered, and daily and duly adored and observed, loved and praised. And then, carrying thus circumspectly and thankfully, as his redeemed, and most highly obliged, better things shall we gain by this course, than any that we have lost by this storm; and be so prepared for all events, that nothing which befalls us, shall undo us: but all work for good to us; and at last, succeed most happily with us, to set us quite above the reach of any more such annoyance and disturbance: even there, where will be rest and safety, serenity and tranquillity, and every thing to satisfaction and delight; yea, to the utmost joy and felicity; and that to all eternity,

THE PRAYER.

“ **G**REAT and holy GOD! the supreme Com-
 “ mander of the world; who hast all the crea-
 “ tures at thy beck; and even the unruliest of them
 “ to go and come, in the service which thou ap-
 “ pointest them. When thou sendest out thy com-
 “ mand upon earth, thy Word runs very swiftly;
 “ yea, flies on the wings of the wind. Thou hast
 “ stretched out thy hand, O Lord, against us, and,
 “ in a dreadful manner, thou hast stricken us; com-
 “ missioning winds to blow, and waves to rage; so
 “ as to shatter the city, and the navy, counted
 “ the nation’s pride and glory. Thou didst cause
 “ judgment to be heard from heaven; to astonish
 “ and punish the inhabitants of the earth; to make
 “ us feel the smart of our mighty provoking sins;
 “ and

“ and to awaken our secure and drowfy souls. We
“ hear and fear, O Lord, and humble ourselves to
“ thy eternal glorious Majesty; confefling and be-
“ wailing our defert of the like feverity: and for
“ our efcape, and freedom from it, admiring and
“ magnifying the riches and wonders of thy abun-
“ dant mercy. That thou haft been our refuge
“ from the ftorm; and kept the deftruction from
“ us, which fwept away fo many befide us. O what
“ are we better than them; that they fhould be
“ taken, and we left! we are unworthy, and full
“ of provocation: but thou, Lord, art rich in mer-
“ cy, and full of compaffion. We muft needs fay
“ it; when we do fo find it, and feel it; and have
“ been preferved alive and fafe by it; and ftill do
“ fubfift, and feed, and refrefh ourselves, upon it.
“ O that we may give thee all the glory of it; and,
“ from the ground of the heart, for ever blefs thee
“ for it!

“ Let us not be that fenfelefs and incorrigible
“ people, whom no mercies nor judgments do kind-
“ ly work upon; but fo hear thy rod, that we may
“ not be confumed in thy wrath; and be fo grateful
“ for all thy patience with us, and thy loving kind-
“ nefs to us; that thou mayeft never withdraw
“ them from us; nor give us up to the foes (that
“ are fo ready to infult over us) to have their will
“ upon us.

“ O give us hearts tenderly fymphathizing with
“ our fuffering neighbours, and highly thankful for
“ thy diftinguifhing favours. And may we be fo
“ warned and reformed, by thy judgments lighting
“ upon others: that we may never be made the
“ woful examples ourselves; but ftill fpared in
“ mercy, till ready to die in fafety, and fitted up
“ for thy glory.

“ O may

“ O may we have all our evil things in this life:
“ and deal with us, Lord, as thou wilt here, so that
“ thou spare us for ever. Yea, let the uncertainty
“ and hazard, the mischief and ruin, to which we
“ see all things upon earth still lie open, more
“ loosen our hearts from them: to obtain and se-
“ cure those most safe and unchangeable, as well as
“ most high and incomparable fruitions, of thy
“ heavenly kingdom; which will abide the same
“ for evermore. Amen.”

SUBMISSION

S U B M I S S I O N
TO THE
R I G H T E O U S N E S S of GOD:
OR, THE
N E C E S S I T Y
O F

Trusting to a better Righteousness than our Own.
Opened and defended, in a plain, Practical Discourse,
upon Romans x. 3.

By BENJAMIN JENKS,
Late Rector of Harley in Shropshire, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable
the Earl of Bradford.

Recommended by the late Mr. HERVEY.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N.

THE late Rev. Mr. JAMES HERVEY, in his Meditations, vol. i. p. 271, speaking of the Righteousness of God, says, “ This, and several other
 “ hints, interspersed in the two volumes, refer to
 “ the active and passive righteousness of Christ, im-
 “ puted to believers, for their justification, Which,
 “ in the opinion of many great expositors, is the
 “ mystical and the most sublime meaning of the
 “ *wedding-garment*, so emphatically and forcibly re-
 “ commended by the Teacher sent from God, Matt.
 “ xxii. 11. A doctrine, which some of those who
 “ honour my Meditations with a perusal, probably
 “ may not receive with much, if any, approbation.
 “ I hope, the whole performance will not be cashier-
 “ ed for one difference in sentiment. And I beg
 “ that the sentiment itself may not hastily be reject-
 “ ed, without a serious hearing. For I have the
 “ pleasure of being intimately acquainted with a
 “ gentleman of good learning, and distinguished
 “ sense, who had once as strong prepossessions a-
 “ gainst this tenet, as can well be imagined; yet
 “ now he not only admits it as a truth, but em-
 “ braces it as the joy of his heart, and cleaves to it
 “ as the rock of his hopes.

“ A clear and cogent Treatise, written by Mr.
 “ BENJAMIN JENKS, entitled, *Submission to the Righteousness of God*, was the instrument of removing
 “ his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment.”

T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THIS little Tract, which now for several years has passed in the world with some acceptance, and, for ought I know, without any public contradiction, adventures again abroad in another edition; the former impressions being a good while since gone off, I hope to the good satisfaction of all such as seek after that righteousness, the work of which is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance for ever.

And if there be not such an universal acquiescence among us, in this comfortable doctrine of our church, as there seems to be at this time, in the happy nursing-mother of our church, those prejudices and grudgings which may yet remain against it, do afford reason, more than I could wish, for the further insisting upon it: but no reason can I apprehend, why a Minister of the Gospel should fear to persist in asserting the faith of the gospel; and such a truth as is of the last importance, plainly taught by the church, as well as by the Scripture, in terms so express, that a great man in the learned world, one of the eminent heads and reputed oracles of his university (my worthy friend, lately gone to rest from his arduous labours) could not forbear to make the ingenuous acknowledgment, that I had the articles of our church clearly on my side. And when I minded him of a penetrating expositor presiding in this church, who (a little before) had endeavoured to give those articles a turn the remon-

strant way, he replied with some heat, It will never do, and that it was a vain thing for any one to attempt it. Though, at the same time, himself thought fit to undertake the vindication of that very cause, which he confessed was opposite to the undoubted sense of his own church.

I am willing to think, that it was only (*disputandi gratia*) to tempt the country-parson. For when he first shewed me his celebrated book (now published) his expression was, That he had there stabbed the Socinian cause. But I am apt to think, that none who is in earnest on the part of Arminius, can ever give Socinus any thrust to reach the heart.

Though few Pelagians think fit to own the hateful name, even while they stickle for the pestilent doctrine; according to St. Jerom's observation, That Pelagianism is the only heresy, which is ashamed to appear for the cause abroad, which its fautors suggest and propagate in corners, yet experience tells us, what credit a prevailing mode can give to things none of the best. Yea, let them be never so indefensible, yet, if smiling upon depraved nature, they will not want for champions and abettors to maintain the cause, even to death.

*Fool of rebellion, I would die,
Or fight, or travel, or deny
That thou hast ought to do with me. HERB.*

So raves the man who is in (not his pure, but) his corrupt naturals.

Naturam expellas furca licet——.

But whatever palliators of man's wicked apostacy may fly in my face, where I have begun to break up the fallow-ground, I shall not take my hand off from this plough.

And

And to see the faith of Christ assaulted and attacked, not only (as when it first set out) by open adversaries and professed infidels, but by such as lurk within the church, and pass under the Christian name, is enough to raise every believer's indignation, that would not be a traitor to his own professed religion.

Indeed, the cause which I take upon me here to maintain, as it deserves, so it has, many much better champions. But yet, I hope, it may receive no detriment from my concern in it, when it shall appear, that one of such small accomplishments has yet so much to say for it. And truly that which is of God needs little of man, where Holy Scripture shall but be heard. But, whoever they be, that can make light of what is spoken by the Lord, are not like to regard what is said by the best Christian, or by the greatest scholar in the world. No; the lofty opinion which they have of their own sufficiency, makes them so assuming, to dictate, as oracles infallible, to all the world; yea, and to model all the Word of God, and teach men more by a few Words, in seven minutes, than any one, that labours in the Word and doctrine, shall do in seven years. Alas! we darken the matter; but they make it plain; plain indeed, that they would explain the faith of our Lord quite out of the church, and out of the world. Though they will not suffer us to recede a tittle from the express words of Scripture, when it is their pleasure; yet let us but offer to hold them to it, and then, it is none of God's Word, but only our sense; and what reason have they to be determined by that? Their own reason (as the candle of the Lord) they are ready to fall down and adore; not remembering, that still it is but a candle, and so diminished since the fall, as to dwindle in the socket. And all the candles upon earth must never offer to vie with the sun in the heavens: nor can they, with
all

all their light united together, ever make such a day, as he alone does make. Yet will they not give the Father of lights leave to reveal any thing, but what their reason can fathom, and grasp, and easily deal with. And if they abide still peremptory by it, that what is above our reason to conceive, is above our faith to believe, (keeping strictly tenacious of that maxim) they must turn such sceptics, as to disbelieve, not only the infinite, eternal being of God ; but the very frame and union of their own souls and bodies, and a hundred incomprehensibles, in common nature, just before them, which will so baffle them, that they shall never be able to resolve Nicodemus's question, " How can these things be ? "

Though it is true, men are not to pull out their own eyes, because these cannot see quite within the heavens, nor renounce their understanding, because it is not infinite, to parallel his that gave it. For reason, in its own sphere, is an excellent guide ; and as far as it demonstrates, we may be certain. But then there are demonstrations of the Spirit, as well as of reason ; and, I hope, those shall be allowed superior to these. For, though the spirit of a man knows the things of a man ; yet " the things of " God, knows no man, but the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 11. But even these things, some, notwithstanding, would be thought as able to master, as any thing else. And where they are above them, even for that reason they will take leave to reject them ; nor think it enough to pass by them, but they must also cast their scoffs at them, and blunder on still, even as much as that ruler of the Jews did, John iii. concerning regeneration, and the other doctrines of faith thereon dependent.

But what Christians, indeed, can they be this while, that were never born of the Spirit of Christ, nor by that Spirit and faith conjoined to the glorious Head of Christians ? Yea, what part are they like

like to have in regeneration, or in Christ himself, that seem neither to know nor to care, whether there be any Holy Ghost, by whom alone they can be so renewed and united? and instead of seeking to partake of him, are readier to do despite to him? And how can we ever believe them to be led by that Spirit, which they have the foreheads to mock and blaspheme? Let them pretend to be never so good, I cannot admire the goodness of those men, that are for tearing up the very roots, upon which all true goodness should grow. Rather do I admire their confidence, to pretend either to goodness, or to the Christian name, who set so light by that blessed Spirit, which makes all the true Christians that are in the world.

How allowable soever it might be for Heathens, who knew no better, to set up natural light above all; yet, when such as have the blessed gospel, cannot forbear to burlesque and expound it even all away, they may look for the heavier sentence from him, with whom they make so bold. When one of his great indictments now against the world, is of "sin, because they believe not on him," John xvi. 9. Though this they may not think fit to reckon among their sins, yet is it, indeed, the great leading sin, that threatens them with a dreadful doom, if they do not mend their creed, as well as their morals, and make better friends with the Son of God, and acknowledge his deity, and beg his mercy, and look to be pardoned and saved by his merits. But, O how far are they from this, whose confidence of their own opinion rises so high, as even to give defiance to all that dare but make any question of it, whether they may not be deceived?

It is true, they had a noble master here in England, for one of their founders, whose writings we know; and some of his dying words to his children (I have heard) were to the same tune, saying,
"They

“ They talk of trusting in Christ for salvation ; but
 “ I would have you to be virtuous, and trust to
 “ your virtue to make you happy.” Yet after the
 little brokers and well-willers here to the cause, have
 been fetching from their factors beyond seas, and
 also drawing from the stock of this learned deist at
 home ; notwithstanding all the helps they have, and
 all the pains they take, never are they like to find a
 quiet trade, and good success, as long as the gospel
 lies but open, and so clear against them ; unless we
 should put such an unreasonable value on their rea-
 sonings, as to hearken to them, more than to our
 Lord himself, and all his own inspired messengers.

Such as set up their new fangles, instead of the
 faith once delivered to the saints ; and not only vi-
 lify, but nullify the grace of faith, and while they
 make such a scorn of others systems, and pretend to
 give us a pandect of the Christian doctrine ; either
 quite leave out faith, as an ingredient of little or no
 use, or if they cannot, for shame, omit the mention
 of that, which the gospel all along so much incul-
 cates, yet speak of it so sparingly or triflingly, as if
 it were needless to insist upon it ; and we might
 even do as well without it ; or call that the justify-
 ing faith, and a faith as much as is needful for any
 to make them Christians, which is indeed a believ-
 ing no more than the devils do ; no more than any
 hypocrites, unregenerate persons, and impenitent
 sinners may believe, viz. that Jesus of Nazareth is
 the Messiah : (A stingy, hide-bound faith, by which
 they shall not be obliged to believe either his incar-
 nation or satisfaction ; nor so to degrade themselves,
 as to put all their trust in him, and to look for their
 whole salvation from him.) And when they take
 upon them to enumerate all the benefits we have by
 our blessed Saviour, speak not a word of his merit,
 or redemption through his blood : no, but rather
 deny his death to be in the room and stead of sin-
 ners ;

ners; and depend not on the blood of God, to make their peace, and reconcile all things to himself: and while they are such busy men, to ruin their own, and others comfort and salvation, would be thought yet the only Christians: our church (Hom. of Salv.) will not allow them to be so much as Christians at all, when it tells us, “that this faith, in the
“merits of Christ’s precious blood, is the true cause
“of justification, the Holy Scripture teacheth us:
“this is the strong rock and foundation of the
“Christian religion. This doctrine advances and
“sets forth the true glory of Christ, and beats down
“the vain glory of man. And this whoever denies
“it, is not to be accounted a Christian man.” Therefore, what a late writer would intimate, that the remonstrant party is supposed to be the greatest part of the church of England, and a Semi-pelagianism now the common mode, I will suppose to be a great slander; because I cannot think the main body of our clergy to be guilty of such prevarication and mere sham, to subscribe and signify their consent to articles and homilies, as sound and wholesome doctrine, which they believe in their heart to be false and rotten.

Yet am I sensible, that some things which I here plead for, against the common enemies, offensive to our church, will also grind upon other persons within it; whose learning and worth in themselves, as well as their station and the dignity of their places, I cannot but honour. And this signification of my dissent from them, is so far from gratifying any humour of contradiction in me, that I find it really pain and grief to me. But where we see so darkly, and know but in part, mistakes are no more than what may be expected on either side. And whether they on the contrary part, or I be in the right, all readers will take their liberty to judge, as shall appear best to themselves. However, I believe, and therefore

fore have I spoken, the very sense of my soul ; and not hastily, upon first thinking of the matter ; but as the result of long search, and deep consideration, and much trouble and diligence, to compare and weigh what is said on both parts. And now I see my obligation in so good a cause, wherein I have had so near and great a concern, to testify the gospel of the grace of God, as the Apostle speaks, Acts xx. 24. and to break silence with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxi. 15, 16. " My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day ; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God ; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only."

I must confess, that when first I set out for a preacher, I did appear (after the then mode of a prevailing party) a stickler for Pelagius : and what I wanted in skill, I made up in bitter zeal, against all that asserted and advanced the faith, which then I was for running down ; and that not only as empty of truth, but full of absurdity. And though I saw scriptures, and articles, and homilies, all standing in my way ; yet, being newly come from the fountain of learning, and observing which way the stream ran there, and under what extreme odium was every thing that appeared Calvinistical, (tho' never so much the express doctrine of the church of England ;) and knowing what great names I had then to credit and strengthen my cause ; and proud also of some arguments, wherewith I thought myself able to defend it : thus I drove on for a while, in my new province, till it pleased the gracious God, (who knew what need I had to be humbled,) in the midst of perfect health, and all the favour of men, and prosperity of the world, to throw me down under great and sore troubles of mind, and doubtings of my state, and dread of his wrath : where for a long while I lay, refusing to be comforted ; yet all that time, not intermitting the
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work of my place, but was rather more concerned and sedulous in it, and (I thought) more assisted and fitted for it, than ever before. And in that school of sharp discipline, did I learn of my heavenly Teacher, the doctrine of faith, which ever since I have made conscience to maintain with all my strength. And as I dare not (upon any temptation whatsoever) offer to oppose it myself; so it touches me in the most sensible part, to hear any contempt signified against it by others: for there I take the old man to be up, *se defendendo*, and I cannot but look upon the Pelagian sentiment (in the point I oppose) as the very dictate of corrupt nature, and every unconverted man, more or less, to be leavened with it. So does it claw fallen man, with a good opinion of himself; to make him believe, either that he needs no conversion, or that he is man sufficient to do all belonging to it, at his own pleasure. And though I dare not affirm every Arminian to be unconverted; (no, I am willing to hope better of many; yea, and where I see fruits of holiness in any, I will conclude, that there is the root of the matter, however his opinion and mine, in some things controverted, may differ;) yet must I needs declare my very great wonder, that any man in the world, who has ever known the grace of God in truth, should not be filled with the highest admiration of that grace; and instead of offering to dissemble and cloud it, should not rather be most free and forward to ascribe all to it; and see how little or indeed nothing it is, that a man contributes to turn the scale, and make himself to differ: when as the gracious God looks upon us in our blood, to bid us live, yea, quickens us, even when dead in trespasses and sins; and till he came with an over-ruling impetus upon me, I know too well, that all my own power was only to withstand the work; and it would never have been done, if it had not been the Lord's own doing. Herein then my own

experience makes me heartily subscribe to the tenth Art. of free will: " That the condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn
 " and prepare himself, by his own natural strength
 " and good works, to faith, and calling upon God;
 " wherefore we have no power to do good works,
 " pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace
 " of God by Christ preventing us, that we may
 " have a good will, and working with us, when we
 " have that good will."

Now, if in sticking so close to the articles and homilies of the church, (which I am sure I do, as I really believe I also do the gospel of our Lord,) I must be fain to dissent from some fathers and sons of the church: yet is it no small relief to me, that I have with me, not only all the reformed churches abroad, but (as far as I can learn) all the best bishops, and the greatest worthies that ever presided over this church, for zealous defenders of this faith. So that if I labour under mistakes about the matter whereof I treat, (as I know who will think I do,) I have the good hap to be mistaken with the greatest and best company in the world. It is worthy to be observed, what the archbishop's chaplain, at the beginning of the century now revolved, says in his preface to the articles: " The church of England is not in religion
 " changed, or variable like the moon, nor affects
 " novelty or new lessons, but holds steadfastly and
 " conscionable that truth, which by the martyrs and
 " other ministers in this last age of the world, has
 " been restored to this kingdom, and is grounded
 " upon God's written word, the only foundation
 " of our faith." And indeed the opposite doctrine durst scarce peep out here since the reformation; till in the reign of King Charles I. it began to shew its head with some assurance: and in the reign of King Charles the II. it grew more rampant, as not only the court, but academic mode, and the almost only
 way

way then to preferment, for preachers and writers to inveigh against the doctrine of the articles, which they had solemnly acknowledged, and all, every one, agreeable to the word of God; and scarce endure so much as the title, to have them called articles of religion, as knowing the religion to be changed since the articles were made. And they might also know the sentence of excommunication to belong to them, according to the fifth canon, as impugnators of any of the thirty-nine articles, established in the church of England. But where I cannot hope to convince such as these, nor pretend to instruct any rabbies of the age; I intend this plain discourse for the sake of those unlearned, who need, as much as any else, to be established, yet may be rather shaken and disheartened, than edified or settled, by the contrary doctrine, vented under some big names, and backed with some plausible allegations. But of these teachers, I shall not make bold to speak the hard things which some others do, nor here offer them any reprimand, but only to mind them a little to consider, how the right reverend bishop Hall (whose name and memory leaves so sweet a favour to all good men) capitulates with Arminius, upon his upstart doctrine, (7 Ep. 6 Decad.) “if it be truth thou affectest, what! alone? Could never any eyes, till thine, be blessed with this object? Where has that sacred verity hid itself thus long, from all her careful inquisitors, that she now first shews her head to thee unsought? Has the gospel shined thus long and bright, and left some corners unseen? Away with all new truths; fair and plausible they may be, sound they cannot. Some may admire thee for them, none shall bless thee.”

These [some] may agree with the church, Art. 11. to think it a doctrine full of comfort, indeed that we are justified by faith only; but to believe it also a most wholesome doctrine, there they leave her; unless

less they can fetch themselves off, with that new notion of faith, (they seem so fond of and so hot upon,) which helps to establish justification by works, even at the same time as they profess the doctrine of the church, that it is only by faith. And how is this, but by the fine equivocation of making faith and works to be all one, and taking faith only for faithfulness, or sincere obedience? Nay, a certain clergyman (of strange confidence, and seeming ignorance of his own church's doctrine,) in a folio dedicated to his metropolitan, in the late King Charles's reign, defines the justifying faith which St. Paul speaks so much of, to be nothing but the Christian religion; and justification by faith, nothing but an adhering to, and practice of, Christian religion. And this he counts not enough yet; but soon after adds, that the law of faith demands much more than the law of works did, (bestowing a great deal of railing and scoffing upon all that are contrary minded.) And after him, a greater man, and much more wise and modest, yet calls this faith, our observation of the laws of Christ, and the entire condition of the new covenant, comprehending all the duty which it requires. And this seems to be the prevailing notion among all the writers of that new stamp.

Now do I bless God for the scriptures, and particularly St. Paul's epistles, from which I can easily gather up a satisfying notion of justifying faith; when these men, methinks, lead us into a wood, as if they had a mind only to darken a plain matter, and amuse and lose the reader. And while they confound faith with works, and make no difference between believing and obeying, what do they but take away all distinction between the cause and the effect? and may as well tell us, that the sun in the firmament, and the fruits upon the ground, are one and the same; or that a man's natural life, and all the actions produced by that life, are the same; for faith works
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by love, and is shewed by good works; as the sun helps to produce fruits, and the life to perform actions. It does, indeed, virtually include obedience, and is the principle of it; but yet I cannot call it the very obedience itself; for essence and properties still use to have a distinct consideration; though the truth of that may better be known, by the workings of these: yet still it is one thing, what the true justifying faith is; and another thing, what it does effect where it is. I grant, that it is ever productive of good works, but must deny that the works so produced do justify us in the sight of God.

Now some that take pains to prove that to be no true faith, which works not a holy life, do only tell you, what faith is not, to guard it from the abuses of rude pretenders; but they say nothing at all, what it is, to the establishment of any true believers; as long as they conceal or deny faith to be the soul's relying and trusting on the merits and satisfaction of Christ Jesus for pardon and salvation; nay, while they hold you in hand, (by the drift of all their discourses on faith,) that right believing is nothing else, but holy living; and that no faith, but evangelical obedience, or a godly, righteous, and sober conversation, (which, we grant, is the necessary way of salvation, and a superstructure that must be built upon faith's foundation, that nothing else) will ever avail to justification, i. e. (directly opposite to the apostle,) that we are justified by works, and not by faith. And here their assurance and swaggering grows to such a height, that they seem to carry all before them. And had we not better authority, and stronger conviction, wherewith to confront their words and reasonings, we must even give up the cause, and own our silly mistake. But when we come to consult scriptures, the unanimous confessions of the reformed; the positive determinations of our own church, the consciences of the best men, and the experiences of
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all true believers in the world ; then we cannot but stand amazed at the audacity of some church-men, and Protestant writers, that they should so coarsely use their own church, and so fiercely let fly at the Protestant religion. And from such I shall not be much startled to hear Antinomian, which I know they can throw, as a hard word, at the heads of some that least deserve it, when really the mad rage is at another thing, that sounds like it, Anti-Arminianism. This is meant, though less named, because the other sounds more invidious.

But, indeed, they that make believing insignificant, where there is but the probity of living, thus stand ready to surrender the great articles of our faith, to any Jews, Turks, and Infidels, provided they lead but a good life, or what they are pleased to call so. And then Tully and Seneca may do even as well as St. Peter and St. Paul ; and we must not regard our Lord Jesus, when he is so positive, John viii. 24. " If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die " in your sins." I will not say, they would bring us back from Christ to Moses again : for, indeed, it is from Christ and Moses both, to the old Pagans, that had but the light of nature, which these now so cry up, and magnify above the law and the gospel too, and affect to be such rational preachers, that they forget themselves to be gospel preachers.

*Divinity's transcendent sky
With the edge of wit they cut and carve,
Reason triumphs and faith lies by. Herb.*

And, at the same time, how do they run down the doctrine of our church ? which teaches us (Art. 18.) " they are to be had accursed, that presume to " say, that every man shall be saved by the law or " sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to " frame

“ frame his life according to that law, and the light
“ of nature.”

But though I grant (and in the following discourse shall make appear, to all abusers of our doctrine) that any pretences to good faith, without good life, are a dangerous cheat, and scandalous hypocrisy; yet we must not therefore jumble and confound the nature and distinction of things, to make *credenda* and *agenda* terms synonymous; nor dare to give God the lie, in refusing to believe the record which he has given of his Son, 1 John v. 10, 11. “ That he has given to us eternal life, and this life “ is in his Son.” Though we might pretend to live as well without that belief; yet still must we abide by what is written, and throw all our faith and religion upon the Holy Scripture revelation. And whoever deride such credulity, we shall at last find that to be the best grounded religion; when it is not, what this man says, or what the other magisterially lays down, but what the Lord says, and how he has determined, to which we must stand, and by which we must be doomed; and therefore should not suffer ourselves to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, as this or that proud wanton opinionist dogmatizes or dictates? nor let all the world ever unhinge or shake us out of that, which we find plainly fixed and settled in the gospel of truth. No; even he that was for becoming all things to all men, that he might gain some, yet would not heal and accommodate between Christ and Belial. And however, in lesser matters (as to rites and ceremonies, and such things indifferent, as strike not at the faith of the gospel) we must not be stiff and pugnacious, but bear one another’s burdens, and forbear one another in love; yet, when the foundations are undermined, on which the church itself, and all our hopes and happiness are built, we cannot think fit then to be seeking the
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commendation of mild and gentle, for giving up to such supplanters of the gospel, that which should be dearer to us all than our lives: for easiness here will not become us, where faithfulness infinitely behoves us. No, we must not, for what they call good humour, nor out of compliment to every pretender, renounce the faith of Christ, nor die in our sins: for if we lose the faith, it is doubt we shall lose somewhat else along with it, and good conscience will go after it. Nay, the apostle tells us, 1 Tim. i. 19. this is thrown overboard, before the other is shipwrecked.

And it were well, if they that exclaim so much of others loose tenets, had a little more humility and patience to examine their own; for they are not ever accounted most honest, that call by the hard name first. Nor are the violent pleaders for holiness always found the most holy persons. They do indeed but the more awaken suspicion, when their own mouths so much extol themselves. But for all their boasted ingenuity and probity, let them be never so righteous and good (instead of envying, we wish they were still more so;) yet are we not to be awed by the learning of one, nor by the confidence of another; no, nor by the seeming honesty of a third; when, in the great matters of salvation, we see how learned men may be in the dark, and confident men shamefully out; yea, and good men under foul mistakes. But we are sure that God's Word can never misguide us. And if we come there but honestly and humbly, to learn his will, and our duty, we may rest assured, that we shall not err in any needful point, to our undoing. And though we must not expect now to be above all ignorance and misapprehensions; yet thus shall we be secure from all damning errors, and destroying delusions. And that is a satisfaction, as much as we can hope to attain.

tain in this life: wherein also we may acquiesce, as sufficient for our present state, and not covet to be wise above what is written, nor think to be righteous overmuch, or to be justified by a righteousness, beyond what the Holy Scripture declares necessary to our justification, *i. e.* the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, apprehended and applied by our faith, which, I think, I have reason to call a better righteousness than our own. And they that do not see any reason or need that they have to look after it, and rely upon it, I am sorry for them: and (in a way further than themselves seem to desire) I pray the Lord to have mercy upon them.

A DISCOURSE

UPON

ROMANS X 3

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

THE grand inquiry that most of all concerns every sinful man, is, how he shall come off, and obtain peace and acceptance with the holy, offended God! Though secure sinners trouble not their heads about such matters, but seem to be in more care, how they shall keep conscience asleep, than what they shall answer, when brought into judgment; or they take up with some random hopes of the divine mercy, without consulting the divine revelation, to inform themselves upon what terms that mercy will be dispensed; yet, whoever is not stupid and dead in sin, but awakened, and conscious of his guilt, must needs have a thoughtful heart, "Wherewithal to appear before the Lord;" what to plead, and how to bear up, at the righteous tribunal of the Judge eternal.

It is not to turn the head another way, or "put the evil day far from us;" it is not to hide in the thickets of worldly concerns and fruitions; much less to go and indulge vain pleasure, and get into jolly company, and there think to eat and drink and,

and sport and rant it away. Ah Lord! what physio is this for the afflicted conscience of a sinner? The poor, disquieted soul, is not so to be stilled with rattles, or any vain diversions. But when the great trial is yet to come, the great care should be, what defence then to make, and how to escape?

That righteousness is needful for the purpose, I take all to be agreed. But what righteousness will serve the turn, and which sort we had best trust to, the several pretenders to righteousness cannot so easily hit it off. Now, one of the best teachers, from whom we may learn the certain truth, I think I have here fixed upon; St. Paul, who so studiously discusses this point, and to the good satisfaction of all, But this natural man; with whom it sticks so hard, he cannot swallow that doctrine of faith, upon which the gospel of our Lord hangs so much, as even the whole of our title to the kingdom of heaven: nay, he applauds himself in it, that such camels will not down with him; as that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God; and that believing, we may have life through his name. The righteousness of works, that he understands well enough; but this righteousness of faith, he knows not what to make of; nor will he ever be persuaded to go out of himself, and depend upon another, which he counts so much below him, and such a stoop and condescension as he cannot away with. And of the very same temper and stiffness still, even to this day, are multitudes called Christians, as well as the Jews, whom the Apostle here censures; "They being ignorant of God's righteousness," &c.

He shewed the mighty concern that he had for this people, his countrymen, ver. 1. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Their salvation lay very near his heart; and he was afraid they should miss it;

it, by taking the wrong way, and building all their happiness upon such a bottom, as would never bear the fabric, but utterly fail them. Nay, he seems to make the saddest imprecation upon himself for their sakes, chap. ix. 3. "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kindred men according to the flesh." Why, what was the matter with them? and where was the danger that so threatened them? Were they such wicked livers, as to be notoriously guilty of scandalous immorality? No, it should seem the quite contrary; that they were such as took care of their souls, and minded and followed the service of God. For (saith he, ver. next before) "I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God." They are for his worship and glory; nay, they stickle for obedience to his law; and with good intention, and upright conscience, they defend probity and piety. And what then would you have more? Suppose they labour under some mistakes, and those in fundamental points of faith (as you account them); yet, why cannot you let them alone, when they are sober, honest, and religious men, that seek after God, and have a zeal for him? Yet this would not satisfy the Apostle: no, he could not think it yet enough, when he knew them so to err in the principle, as was enough to set them out all the way; and that they opposed the honour of God, to the Son of God; and opposed the observation of the law, to the faith of Christ.

Whence I shall take up this note, by the way, That we ought to be concerned for our friends and neighbours, who lie under damnable errors, though they may be men of good carriage, and commendable conversation. However our great care must be to convince and reclaim the vicious and ungodly, let them be never so orthodox and sound in their opinions; because right thinking will never bring a
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man, to heaven, without holy living: but it is most evident, that presumptuous sinners, and workers of iniquity, are in the wide way to ruin, let them fancy or believe what they will. Yet if a man of virtuous manners go to set up pernicious errors, and plead for a Jewish or a Paganish doctrine, that reviles and destroys the faith of Christ; here I am for reading that as an interrogative, 2 Cor. xi. 4. "Could ye well bear with him?" Or an irony, It is bravely done, to bear with such a one! when we ought not to hear or suffer our holy faith and religion to be so flurred and undermined. For "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Psal. xi. 3. How shall we "build ourselves in our most holy faith," when the bottom, on which we should lay the superstructure, is taken away? Now God's vineyard is not only wasted by the boar out of the wood, and devoured by the wild beast of the field, Psal. lxxx. 13. but the "foxes, even the little foxes, spoil the vines," Cant. ii. 15. The sly seducers, as well as the profligate livers, are mischievous to the church, and to the gospel and kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Yea the subtil foxes may do more hurt than the great ravaging brutes; because (for their pregnant parts, ready elocution, and plausible carriage) less suspected, and looking not only honest and well-meaning, but good and praise-worthy. And be it the most eminent man upon earth, nay, an angel from heaven, that preaches another gospel; our Apostle is so far from having him tolerated, that he pronounces him "accursed," Gal. i. 8. Why, what need such heat and vehemence, if a man think he can gain the same end another way, and obtain heaven by the practice of his virtue, as well as you by the exercise of your faith? Yea he may count to do it more surely, because his virtue is a reality, and your faith may prove but a fancy. Yet this could not content the Apostle;

tle; but he is under a mighty concern to set men right as to the faith of Christ, though they had a zeal for God. And sure then he thought this would never serve the turn, without that. Nay, he knew, by experience in his own case, that it would not do. For, before his conversion, he could say, that he had "lived in all good conscience before God," Acts xxiii. 1. nay, that "as touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless," Phil. iii. 6. Nobody could object any thing against him, for a wicked liver. Why, what then was lacking yet? and what need of his conversion? Indeed, according to the opinion of some, I see no need of it at all. For he being a moral upright man, of a virtuous and pious life, he had already all that was needful to salvation, in their apprehension. Nay, before his conversion, they may take him to be a wiser man, and in a better condition; as having then all the ingredients of their religion, whatever they reckon necessary to make one happy, good conscience, and probity, a sober life, all commendable behaviour towards men; yea, and a pious care for the service of God, according to his understanding. But afterwards, he is up in the boughs, and all for revelations and mysteries; and such spiritual notions, and unintelligible conceits, as, in others, they call cant, and gibberish, and whimsies. When he talks so much of the "wisdom of God in a mystery. The mystery of Christ. And this mystery, Christ in you, the hope of glory. His being the express image of his Father's person. The fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily. The great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh. The things of God revealed by his Spirit. God shining in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ. The holy scriptures being able to make one wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Father's chu-

"sing

“sing us in Christ before the foundations of the world, (not because we were, but) that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. God’s saving us, and calling us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. The righteousness of God without the law, by the faith of Jesus Christ. Being delivered from the law, to serve in newness of spirit. Christ being made a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law. God justifying the believers on Jesus. Counting faith for righteousness, to him that worketh not. Laying no foundation, but Jesus Christ. Rising from the dead, that Christ may give us light. Being in the Spirit; in Christ Jesus. And Christ being formed, and living in us; and dwelling by faith in our hearts. Having redemption, and being justified through his blood. Accepted in the Beloved. Having boldness, and access with confidence, through the faith of him. Being saved by grace, through faith; and not of ourselves, but the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

When they see him so full of this (to them) wild enthusiasm, and running over with such sublime nonsense, do not our solid reasoners (as they would be counted) think the man is lost; his conversion has spoiled him, and turned the mighty scholar into an egregious babbler? Yea, are they not ready to say to him, as Festus, when he gave the account of his conversion, Acts xxvi. 24. “Paul, thou art beside thyself?” Whatever may be their compliment to St. Paul, if they do not (with the angry Jesuit) call him Lutheran and heretic, or charge him for talking like a fanatic; such, I am persuaded, would be their sense and treatment of another, and so

so bold would they make with any else that speaks in his language.

But this wonderful convert himself was very far from being of their mind. And how does he applaud his change? and how does he despise all his highest attainments before that? Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things: and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And what his own eyes were now opened to see, he labours so much to make all men else understand, and believe, and own. And such as are yet in the dark about it, he expresses his sorrowful heart for them, and uses his endeavours, and takes a great deal of pains to undeceive them, particularly in this place; "They being ignorant of God's righteousness," &c.

"God's righteousness" here, what is it? It is not his own essential rectitude, by which he is a righteous God, and by which, infused into us (according to Osiander's wild sentiment) he makes us also essentially righteous, as himself. But it is either his vindictive justice, whereby he will take vengeance on all sinners that fall under the curse of the law, if they make not their use and benefit of the help and remedy which he has provided for them in the gospel. Or it is the righteousness, which he requires of us, and works in us; not only all outward regularity, but that heart-purity which the superficial Pharisees seemed not to understand, and therefore placed their righteousness so much (if not all) in rites and forms. Or rather, God's righteousness here, is the righteousness

ousness which God bestows upon us, and which his Christ has wrought for us; and that justification of a sinner, which comes by the faith of Jesus, the faith in his blood. (Which is the notion by which I shall abide.) For so, indeed, the Apostle himself expounds it; That, Phil. iii. 9. "the righteousness, which is "through the faith of Christ; the righteousness, "which is of God by faith." And, Rom. iii. 21, 22. he calls it "the righteousness of God without "the law,—and by faith of Jesus Christ," *i. e.* a righteousness not obtained by our perfect fulfilling of the law in our own persons, but by our believing and relying on the Son of God, fulfilling all righteousness for us; which, through a merciful indulgence, now under the gospel-covenant, is imputed to us, as if it had been wrought by us.

Now, of this righteousness the Jews did not think. And such a righteousness, how many learned, knowing men, even among Christians, seem still at a loss to comprehend? "And, going about to establish "their own righteousness," they would set up in its stead, somewhat which they take to be, not only as good, but more real, and much better; somewhat which they work out of the strength of nature, by exercising themselves in virtuous ways; somewhat that is inherent in themselves, which they attain to by observing the law; and therefore he calls it "the righteousness of the law," and their own, as not made over to them by imputation from Christ, in whom believers are said to be "the righteousness of God," 2 Cor. v. 21.

And let not any imagine, that by their own righteousness here, is meant only such a righteousness as consists in works of the ceremonial law, or hypocritical works, and such as are done before faith and grace. For, it is the righteousness of such a law the Apostle speaks of, by which is "the knowledge of "sin;" and that says, "Thou shalt not covet,"

Rom. vii. 7. a law that "justifies the doers of it," Rom. ii. 23. a law, "which if a man do the things injoined in it, he shall live by them," Rom. x. 5. a law, which is "established by faith," and not to be "abolished," Rom. iii. 31. And none of all this can be affirmed of the ceremonial law. Yea, it is a "law of righteousness," Rom. ix. 31. a law that is "holy, just, and good," chap. vii. 12. a law, that condemns all counterfeit performances, " (drawing nigh to God with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips, when the heart is removed far from him," Isa. xxix. 13.) a law that was the whole rule of obedience to the church of old, and that takes hold of the very heart, requiring to "love the Lord our God with all the heart and soul, and mind and might; and one's neighbour as one's self." And what can any believers under the gospel do more? How then can I subscribe to the assertion of a modern writer, that "the law of Moses tended to make men no more than outwardly righteous;" and that "the obligation of it extended no further than to the outer man?" And, who will think so basely of God's pure and righteous law, that a man might fulfil it, and yet be a hypocrite? when the very best works that ever we can do, are all required by this law. And yet they are all excluded from the honour of effecting our justification before God, because still they are imperfect, and therefore short of what the law requires. And if all our own works are excluded, sure it must be understood of our good works. For what pretence can be for the bad? and who could expect to be justified for doing wickedly? Yea, where St. Paul excludes works from justifying the sinner, how can we suppose him to mean works of the Mosaic law, as such, when the famous example, which he produces to strengthen his doctrine, Abraham, was dead above three hundred years before that

that law was given ; and when the Gentiles, whose Apostle he was, and to whom he writes of this matter, were never under it, but without it? How much beside the purpose then had it been to dissuade them from a conceit of justification by that law, which they could never pretend to?

Nay, in the matter of justification, he disclaims his own works done after his conversion, as well as those done before it, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Gal. ii. 16. and Phil. iii. 9. And the evangelical obedience, is it not still our righteousness, because we are bound to do it, and it is wrought in us, and by us? Though done in faith, and not without the influx of God's grace, yet it is our work, as far as any thing of the creatures can be called their own: for in God we "live and move; and he works all our works in us," even those of nature, as well as of grace. And upon the very same account, as some would make the works of believers meritorious, our Apostle shuts them all out, Eph. ii. 10. even because we are "God's handy-work, created to them." And even "the just shall live," not by their works, "but by their faith," Gal. iii. 11, not for any supposed worthiness that is in them, but by their believing in him, who, indeed, is worthy. Still he would have all that renounced, which suggests matter of boasting; as do the works of a believer; and that more than of another, because his works are better. And though they be done by God's gift and help; yet if we were justified by them, we might glory in them. So did the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. Though he magnified himself, and looked with a supercilious disdain upon others, and stands upon record for a proud boaster; yet he so far owned the Lord, and ascribed all to him, as to cry, "God, I thank thee, that I am not" so and so.

And,

And, indeed, such as plead for works done by the grace of God to justify them, may as well plead, that all manner of works, without distinction (counted good) should justify them; because they use so to confound nature and grace, that, according to them, even a man's rational faculty, and his natural ability to work at all, is as much of grace, as any peculiar qualifications wrought by the Holy Spirit. And so we must leave them (if they will) to quarrel with the Apostle, for making any difference at all between our own righteousness and the righteousness of God.

However, when it is the mercy of God, and the merit of Christ, that justifies the undeserving; methinks it is no fair thanking the Lord, for enabling them to do any good works, to go and set those works in the place of his grace, and give them the honour due to that. And I must confess, it would be as disingenuous and wicked to arrogate this glory of justification to our faith, which others confer upon their works. For though faith dignifies us, in receiving that righteousness of our Saviour, by which we are justified, and by which the imperfection of our works is covered, and our own righteousness made significant, to stand us in any stead; yet, all this while, it is not faith, as our work; no, but only as the vessel which God gives us to receive the treasure. And in itself, what is it, but like an earthen pot, filled with gold and jewels? And then if faith itself, by which we are said to be justified, (as it apprehends the righteousness of Christ which does it,) yet has so poor a share in the matter, (though it be all that can be done on our parts;) O what part or honour will here be left for works, which the Apostle utterly excludes, as having nothing to do in the business of justification, but only come after, as the fruits and consequents of that faith which does the work!

All

All this I do here so much inculcate, because I know what pains the self-justiciaries are at still, to bring in somewhat of their own to do the business; and how much they are aggrieved to be stript of all their own plumes, that Christ may be all in all. If they cannot get it one way, they will have it another. If one sort of self-righteousness will not do for their justification, another shall. Thus they go about to set up some righteousness of their own; and they will not be put off it, but attempt it over and over. Like one that would (στήσαι) set up a dead carcase to stand by itself; but that will not fadge, it cannot be accomplished. However, still they are trying at the unfeasible thing; and this they would fain have to do their business, without any righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

And so "they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." That which is of his choosing and ordaining, they do not approve, and like well of it; they will not yield and subscribe to it, as the best and only way of salvation. No, but they dispute and cavil, and are full of their exceptions against it. They find great fault with it; and they make but even a mere mock of it. It is foolishness to them, to look for life and salvation from another's death and passion. To be so beholden to the Son of God, and take all as a gratuity from him, this will not down the stout stomachs. So to receive the kingdom of God, as "little children," (which our Saviour says all must do, that will enter there,) they will not be such babies. No, they think themselves to be more men, and to know better things. They will not therefore vouchsafe to yield unto God's way of justifying and saving sinners, only through the merits and righteousness of his Son, apprehended and applied by their faith.

And thus it is expressed here, "will not submit," to shew with how much ado the natural man is brought

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brought to accept of mercy and happiness at God's hands, for Christ's sake. Such will stand it out as long as ever they are able. They will see what they can make of it in themselves, and will search all the world over for righteousness, before they will come to the Saviour of God's appointing; come to him, labouring and heavy laden.

And again, it is to shew, what meekness and lowliness is requisite to make one the true disciple of Jesus, to receive the saving benefit by him, and humbly to rely and depend upon him. Before it comes to this, there must be self-emptying, and self-denial; great abasement and humiliation. A man must be hard bestead, and fore put to it, and even thrown down to the ground, (as our Apostle was,) ere he will become so submissive and tractable, and ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Before that, he lays down the law himself. Thus it must be; and so I will have it my own way; it can be no other way. No, he will hear of none else. All is nonsense that you talk to him of a righteousness transferred from one to another. Though it be the way of God's prescribing, no matter for that; he makes a scorn of it, and will "not submit to the righteousness of God."

Now from this place of scripture, I shall observe,

I. How dark-sighted even the wisest men are by nature, in God's way of justifying and saving sinners, "ignorant of God's righteousness."

II. How absurd is the attempt to set up our own righteousness; "going about to establish their own righteousness."

III. What a hinderance is pride to their happiness, who stand upon their terms with God, and will not submit to his righteousness. They will not have it his way, and they shall not have it their own.

I. Observe here,

How dark-sighted even the wisest men are by nature,

are, in God's way of justifying and saving sinners; ignorant of God's righteousness."

It was spoken of the Jews, that had the oracles of God, and their rabbies, and schools of the Prophets, scribes and Pharisees, counted the most intelligent learned persons then in the world. Yet, in this most material point, they were at the foulest loss, and even in gross ignorance. What a bungler did Nicodemus (one of their leading men) shew himself in the business of regeneration? John iii. 9. To be born again? born of the Spirit? what stuff was this to him? he could not devise how any such thing could be. And so, the preaching of Christ crucified, what a stumbling-block was it to the Jews? 1 Cor. i. 23. They cannot get over the block to this day, nor ever bring themselves to believe, that salvation should come to them from one that was condemned and executed as a malefactor; and that any should be justified in the sight of God, through faith in his blood. Here still does it stick so hard with them, and with so many Judaizers among ourselves, who yet name the name of Christ. Nay, this the Gentiles rejected as a ridiculous story. It is to the "Greeks foolishness." The Athenian wits scorned St. Paul as a babbler, for preaching any such doctrine among them, Acts xvii. 18. "Where is the wise? (says he,) where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. i. 20. and ver. 26. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh are called." No, all their parts and abilities (though rising never so high) cannot reach up to this "hidden wisdom of God," 1 Cor. ii. 7. "which he hides from the wise and prudent, but reveals even unto babes," Matth. xi. 25. And this is the reason, that the most profound and sharpest men cannot be masters of it; with all their improvements and searches, and insight
into

into natural things ; because it is to be known only by divine revelation. The righteousness of God is " revealed from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17. We are to receive it as purely an object of faith, wherein, we are gradually to grow and establish ourselves ; and therefore it may be said to be " from faith to faith," i. e, from one degree of it to another. For it hangs all upon the revelation of God : both the righteousness itself, and the manner of imparting it, are taught us only in the holy scripture, and by the Spirit of God. And therefore the masters of reason are so averse to receive what all their reason could never discover. For though natural light, and our rational faculties, can teach us, that we should act righteously towards God and man ; yet for the imputed righteousness of Christ, it is only the Spirit of God can convince the world of that : John xvi. 8. " He shall convince the world of righteousness." Therefore our Apostle (as quick-sighted, and as great a scholar, as the highest pretender, yet he) knew nothing of it, till the " light from heaven" came and shewed it to him ; and " God revealed his Son in him," Gal. i. 16. For there is not only a revealing of Christ in the gospel, but a revealing of Christ also in the soul, as " the Lord our righteousness," which is needful to instruct us well in this point of justification by faith in him. And for all that is said in the gospel, of this righteousness of God, and being justified by the faith of Christ, men will snaggle and wrangle on still, to gainsay and evade it, till God reveals it in them, and the Spirit of God comes to convince them. Before such revelation and conviction, even the acutest men grope in the dark, as to these things of the Spirit, and reject and disdain them, yea, ridicule and blaspheme them : and are ignorant both of the law of God, and the righteousness of God.

I. They

I. They are ignorant of God's law, the design and purity of it; and their evil case and misery under it.

1. They know not the design of this law, nor wherefore it was given; but mistake it to be, in order to their working a righteousness out of it, so as to be saved by it, and that through their own performance, without the interposition of a Mediator. Whereas the law was never delivered "to give life unto any;" as we may learn from Gal. iii. 21. "For if there had been a law given, that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God: for by the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. iii. 20. It is the glass to shew a man his defects and deformities, how far he comes short of observing it, and how much he is obnoxious in transgressing it; and that here he is gone and lost, if he have not a further help. Therefore it was only according to the youngster's own principle, that our Lord answered him, Matth. xix. 17. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." True, he should, upon performance of that condition. But it is as true, that this condition is now impossible to any child of Adam. The man asked "what he should do?" shewing that he sought life in works; and then if he did so, our Saviour let him know, that it must be by observing the law of God, because that is the perfect rule of obedience. And no other works could serve the turn; and even those alone, he should find such a task, as would give him enough of it, and (if ever he came to understand himself) make him fain to seek out further.

Such another commonly mistaken text, seems to be that, Rom. ii. 13. "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified;" i. e. they shall be so, if they do it, as it ought to be done. But what then? is the doc-

trine to be raised from hence, that justification cannot be had without our own fulfilling the law of God? and that no man can be justified but by the deeds of the law? So the sound may seem to carry it. But it is plain, that the Apostle's design there is quite another thing; even to humble the Jews hearts, and to stop their mouths; in shewing, that as none of them did, so none of them could, keep the law, to their justification. And then he infers from the premises, chap. ii. 20. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God." No, you must be glad to take another course; for this will never do; how often, and how far soever it has been attempted, it is not to be performed. And though many are still hammering at it, they can make nothing of it; nor shall the exactest liver ever be able to work out his salvation only by this means.

Indeed the God of all grace did not intend the delivery of his law, to evacuate and thrust out the covenant of his grace, which he was pleased to make so long before it. As the Apostle assures us, Gal. iii. 17, 18. "This I say, that the covenant which was before confirmed of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law?" The Apostle there puts the question, ver. 19. and he answers it himself: "It was added, says he, because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." It was not given, as such a covenant of works, by coming up to which, men should make their own passage into heaven, so to gain righteousness and life eternal. No, but it was given as a perfect rule of life, to instruct sinners in their duty, and oblige them to do

do it; and then, by shewing them their insufficiency, and convincing them, that all their own obedience could never do, to direct them into better hands; as Hagar, the handmaid, to lead them unto Sarah, the rightful mother; or, (as the Apostle expresses it, Gal. iii. 24.) "as our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ;" that we might be justified by faith in him, where we could never be justified by any works of our own. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. He effects that for them which the law could not; for it only shewed them what was to be done, and gave them no power to do it; but he fulfils it for them, and in them; and so provides, that all the utmost demands of it shall be satisfied to the full. Such therefore as do not take the law for their tutor and monitor, to send them unto Christ Jesus, do mistake it; and are yet to learn the meaning of it.

O sinner! the law of God is as the avenger of blood at thy heels, to drive thee away unto the city of refuge, and even to constrain thee to fly, for the life of thy soul, into the arms of thy Saviour. Take the warning then, and let the necessity of thy case cast thee upon him; and do not neglect the only remedy. If thou wilt not be allured, yet at least be terrified into it: and let the rigour of the law do thee this kindness, to throw thee into the bosom of that blessed Surety, who, where thou art insolvent, and unable to discharge what thou owest to the law, has undertaken for thee, and paid all, even to the utmost farthing.

2. They that stick in the law, and make account to be justified by its righteousness, are ignorant of its latitude and purity; and do not know how broad and spiritual, how holy and heart-searching it is. They think it enough to be honest and sober, to hear and pray, and do some external acts; as if then they had
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had performed obedience to the law sufficient, and so brisk up, and conclude all is well. As St. Paul says of himself, Rom. vii. 9. "I was alive without the law once." *Without* it! when was he so, who all along had been bred up under it? Indeed he was not at all without it in the letter. But it did not before come home in its spirit and power, to ransack his conscience, and to search all the privy corners of his heart. And then he was alive, and thought himself in good case enough. But when it came, and pierced into his soul, with its purifying energy, to catch hold of all his secretest motions, desires, purposes, inclinations, and thoughts, then he saw he was a lost man, by the sentence of the law, if he were not found in Christ, and helped by his merit and grace, to answer for all that he had misdones, and to do all for the future in an acceptable manner.

Never be so vain, then, bankrupt sinner! as to think, that thou (out of thy poor stock and strength) canst satisfy all the precepts of such a righteous, exact, and perfect law. For when thou hast done thy very utmost, thou wilt be still exceedingly short, and hast extreme need to look out further, to shelter thy unrighteousness under that righteousness of thy Redeemer, which alone is complete, and without any manner of blemish. O! wo to the most laudable liver, should he be tried and doomed by this law, naked, without the covert of a Mediator!

3. They that are for working themselves a righteousness of their own, out of legal observances, to serve the turn, without the righteousness of Christ Jesus, are ignorant of their evil case and misery under the law; where, again, they put themselves under the old covenant of works, which brings them into the saddest bondage, "to do the whole law," Gal. v. 3. which, because they can never do; so they fall under the sentence of such guilty malefactors,

factors, as are out of the compass of the promise, and will be cast out of doors, as slaves, and none of the children. For "we are the children of God, only by faith in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 26. "But, as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," ver. 10. And (as it follows there) "that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but, the man that doth them shall live in them." He shall live in them, if he do them. True; but that no man ever did, or can do. And there men stand in their own names, and must bear their own sins, and abide by their own righteousness: which, if it be not perfect, the law that requires perfection condemns them; and they have no Mediator to relieve them. For their covenant which they are under, admits of no such reserve; and so they lie open to all the burning wrath due to sinners; from which they have nothing to screen them, no defence to stand between them. And so wretched a case as this, is it not wonder that any men in their wits should ever chuse to be found in? Yet such a blindness and infatuation is upon all men naturally, that they do not (will not) see the misery; but there lie short of Christ Jesus, and, instead of taking care to come out of that state, take pains rather to defend themselves in it.

O! that you would open your eyes, sinners, and see the wrath of God hanging over you, and abiding upon you, till you get from under the law, and the covenant of works, to come under grace, and the covenant of promise! For "the law worketh wrath," Rom. iv. 15. It gives no hope to any, but such as come quite up to its demands in every particular. You know not then what you do, when
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you are out of Christ; and there think to come off well enough, by some works of honesty, sobriety, church-going, and praying; which, alas! have no sufficiency to absolve the guilty, and to give you a title to the heavenly glory. If you be not endued with that righteousness which is by the faith of Christ, you are still children of wrath, and under the curse. And, if ever you will be wise for your souls, and secure the effects of your eternal salvation, you must renounce all confidence in the flesh, and in any the best things that you can do for yourselves; and resolve to trust all that ever you have, in this only bottom of Christ's righteousness; and desire no such recommendation in the world, as to be found in him, and to have his righteousness imputed unto you. For "blessed is the man
"to whom God imputeth righteousness without
"works," Rom. iv. 6. The inheritance being not by the law, but by promise; and therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, and "the promise
"be sure to all the seed," ver. 16. For, alas! what assurance could there be, if it depended upon such an uncertain thing as their obedience? But when "God declares his righteousness in justifying the
"believers on Jesus," Rom. iii. 26. then it depends upon his own promise and faithfulness, which is sure and never-failing.

Again, they are ignorant of this righteousness, who offer to set up any other to build their justification upon. They do not know its necessity, nor its excellency.

1. Not the necessity; but think they can appear well enough before the tribunal of heaven in their own names; because they are so and so qualified; and thank God, they are not like such and such; no swearers, nor drunkards, nor adulterers, nor sabbath-breakers, nor thieves, nor murderers, nor any notorious sinners; but lead sober and honest,
yea,

yea, good and religious lives. And upon this foundation they lay all their hopes of salvation, when, alas! such righteous ones Christ did not come to call. So he says, Matth. ix. 12. They shall see more need of him, and be more sick for him, before ever they shall have him. As good as ever the boasted virtues are, they will not be at all for their good, whom they keep from the only Saviour. When they think they want even nothing, alas! they want the main of all. They want a Mediator, to intercede for their offending persons; they want the holy ONE of GOD, to purge their defiled natures; they want an infinite propitiation, to atone for all their sins; nay, they want a most powerful Advocate, to recommend their poor, imperfect services; and an Almighty Saviour, to bear the iniquities of all their holy things: and they want the sense of all these wants, to see the extreme need they have of the LORD JESUS, to be their righteousness and their Redeemer.

O sinners! there is no other righteousness that will ever justify you; there is "no other name given under heaven to save you." But if you fail of this, you lose all; and being "without Christ," you have no hope," Eph. ii. 12. Look about you, then, in time, and seek to the all-sufficient Helper, which God, in mercy, has provided to help you. O let all go to make sure of this one needful good, which is more than the all of this world. Like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, Matth. xiii. 46. who, "when he had found one pearl of great price," "went and sold all that he had, and bought it;" O be contented to let go, not only dearest relations and fruitions in the world, but even all wisdom and goodness in yourselves. I mean not, to let them go as to the possession and practice of them, but as to any trust in them, or dependence on them (exclusive of Christ's righteousness:) rather beg pardon,

don, than hope to be saved, for them. And rest all your faith and expectation upon him that died for your sins, and rose again for your justification, and who alone is able to effect that eternal redemption for you, which could never else be wrought by any other person or merit in all the world.

2. They are ignorant of the incomparable excellence of this righteousness, that think of setting up their own; when it is a righteousness which exceeds not only that of innocent Adam, but that of all the glorious angels; because it is the righteousness of God, and not only the righteousness which God has appointed, but the righteousness which he who is God has fulfilled. "The ministration of which righteousness exceeds in glory," 2 Cor. iii. 9. O where then is their sense that can admire the righteousness of a creature, and not regard his righteousness, who is "God blessed for ever?" Sure, "to them that believe he is more precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. for faith has an eye to see that glory which proud reason sets at nought. And though the contempt shall once come to be their own, who now cast their contempt on the "Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world," and set up somewhat else above him, and think to come off as well or better without him; yet "he that believeth on him shall not be confounded," 1 Pet. ii. 6. No; for confusion arises from disappointment: and it will be their portion, who trust to that, which in the needful time will utterly fail them: Isa. l. 11. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks which ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." All other righteousness, what is it, but like a blaze in a wisp of straw, compared with this glorious holding light of the Sun of Righteousness, which is most bright and indefeasible? And therefore

therefore our Apostle counted all things (not excepting his own blameless righteousness of the law) not only no better than filthy rags, but even loss and dung, if set in competition with the righteousness of his Saviour; and for justification, he would "make mention of this, and of this only." But he did not think at this rate before his eyes were opened, and he was enlightened with the revelation from above. No; before that, he had as contemptible an opinion of Christ, and faith in Christ, as any of his virulent blasphemers among us now can have. And so it was spoken as a wonderful effect of his happy conversion, Gal. i. 23. "He who persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith which once he destroyed."

And, O that the like may once be said of all that yet stand out from the faith of Christ, and oppose their own peace with God, which is built only upon their justification by this faith: For "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 1. O that they would come better to bethink themselves, and consult their own blessed interest, as ever they hope for any saving benefit by the Redeemer of the world, and learn to treat him more honourably; and at last bring themselves to "submit to the righteousness of God!"

And, O! that all you who read these lines, may be so kind to your own souls, as to provide yourselves of a righteousness, wherein you may appear, and stand before God in your last trial, with boldness and comfort! And one would think there should not need much ado to persuade any to take the course of the gracious God's own prescribing, that is so visibly advantageous to themselves; when "all the world is become guilty before him," Rom. iii. 19. and there is no pleading, Not guilty; nor any escape to be made by the plea of legal righte-

ousness, ver. 20. But "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is to all, and upon all them that believe:" yea, we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ," ver 22, and 24. O how worthy of all acceptation is such rich grace and mercy! And, instead of shewing any backwardness to submit to it, O with what gladness and thankfulness should every one receive it, and bless the God of all grace for it! that when you are conscious of your sin and wretchedness, and know how ill you have done, and that with all the best you can do anew, there is no making amends for what is past, nor getting in again with the offended Majesty of Heaven; yet, that to him, who "worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith should be counted for righteousness;" (as it is expressly said, Rom. iv. 5.) This is a favour to the poor sinner, such as might be thought indeed too great to be believed; but whenever offered, one would think, it should with both hands most readily be received; and that there should little oratory be wanting, to "pray sinners in Christ's stead" (upon such sweet and happy terms) "to be reconciled unto God." You are wiser than to refuse any advantages of the world, when so easily you may have them; O do not then imitate the perverseness of those who reject the tenders of pardon and life eternal, and will not accept all the most blessed benefits to be enjoyed for ever in the world to come, when the Father of mercies offers them freely, but upon "believing in the name of his Son;" and has assured you, that your faith shall be imputed to you for righteousness; as "Abraham believed God, and that was counted to him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 3, 24. O leave not the Saviour any cause then to complain of you, as of those, John v. 40. "Ye will not come to me, that

“that ye might have life.” But seeing all your interest and felicity treasured up in him, devolve and cast yourselves upon him. And let the Lord Jesus be your only hope; and look for all your remission, and all your salvation at his hands; not for any thing that you have done yourselves, but for the sake of what he has done on your account. And thus will you do the best thing that ever you can do for your own dear souls, and shew your good understanding in the way of salvation; that you are not ignorant of God’s righteousness; but have been “taught, and heard, and learned of the “Father,” to come unto his Christ, John vi. 29, and are better instructed, than to set up a righteousness of your own, wherein to place your confidence.

And so I pass to the second observation,
How absurd is the attempt to engage in such a design? “going about to establish their own righteousness.”

And what is that? Is it walking uprightly, and working righteousness? is it hungering and thirsting after an inherent, at well as an imputed righteousness? No; for this is an eternal indispensable duty, incumbent still upon all; and no believers are exempted from it, but rather more than any else obliged to it; even to “live soberly, righteously, “and godly.” And (to allude to that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 3.) being clothed with Christ’s righteousness, they must not be found naked of their own; but resolve, with Job, chap. xxvii. 6. “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my “heart shall not reproach me so long as I live;” but I will render to all their dues, and be punctual in my dealings with every one; for all piety without honesty is but hypocrisy. Yea, I will render to God, as well as to man, the things that are his; and, as far as I am able, seek and keep that comprehensive

hensive righteousness, which is the constellation of all virtues and graces; the universal conformity to the rule of God's Holy Word; the whole of my duty; such a habit and course of well-doing, as shall denominate me an Israelite indeed, without any allowed guile or iniquity regarded in my heart. This I will ever take care of, and with all my might endeavour to make good.

However contemptuously some can talk of moral accomplishments, they that would have a religion without morality, are further from the kingdom of God, than their despised moral man. And whom the world finds unrighteous, they will (and may) be bold to conclude them ungodly; because God commands all men "to do justly, and love mercy," as well as to "walk humbly with him." And a religion confined to the first table, is quite contrary to that of the Apostle, James i. 27. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

"Do we then make void of the law through faith?" Rom. iii. 31. No such matter: "we establish it;" and provide better for the fulfilling of it, by this doctrine of faith, than ever else it could be fulfilled. The doctrine has no tendency at all to Antinomianism, and carnal liberty; or to throw out repentance, good works and holiness of life. However it may be aspersed, and corrupt men do often abuse this, and indeed all the grace of God, turning it to licentiousness; and though such as are themselves destitute of the spiritual life, do not know how righteousness imputed does work obedience to God, and all holy living; and so they traduce what themselves never understood: yet in all true believers, this righteousness imputed does, and ever will, produce the fruits of righteousness inherent. And notwithstanding faith is alone as to justification

tification, yet it is never alone as to the individual consequence of a godly conversation.

Indeed St. Paul, when he seems to be charged for evacuating the law by faith, does not vindicate himself, by making works and personal holiness the main things needful to our justification in the sight of God; (as is the way of some teachers since, who think they have learned to be more wary than he was;) no, but he urges such gospel-motives to holiness, as are the most powerful with all believers, who, after faith received, will not be less holy, but more; because then they have in them the forcible spring of holy works, which before they had not. Therefore the Apostle tells them, Rom. vi. 14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace." A sort of reasoning, which some of our masters of reason would count very unreasonable, if they heard any of us use it. What, say they, do you teach that believers are not under the law? and is not that as much as to say, they are lawless, and they may even live as they list? for what should hinder them? where there is no law, there is no transgression. And however they fly out, still all is well; and who shall find fault with them? And this is fine comfortable doctrine to such as love their sins better than they do their Saviour.

Thus the unexperienced may think they have covered our doctrine with confusion, and struck it quite dead. But he that was better acquainted with the workings of God's grace, knew the contrary to what they would infer; that the law was never so deadly to kill sin, and so fruitful to produce holiness, as the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For "by the law is the knowledge of sin;" not the cure. No; it does but discover sin, and irritate and provoke it; as a dam cast across the stream, makes it swell, and rage, and rise the higher, till at last it gets up to burst through, or break over the bounds. It gives

no power at all to beat down the sin and wickedness of which it convinces. Whereas the grace of our Lord is a vital principle of holiness in the heart; the seed of God, that there ferments and works, to throw off sin; and will never suffer it to reign, however it still dwells in the mortal body. Therefore they that are under grace, shall not be under the power of sin. And they are indeed strangers to the nature of faith, and to the genius of the new creature, and to the constraining efficacy of the grace of God, and the love of Christ, who can take these for the encouragements of wickedness; than which there are not, in the world, more prevailing restraints from it. And however (the *υιοι της απειθειας*,) the sons of unbelief can make nothing of these inducements, yet no such ingenuous and mighty arguments to gain upon the children of promise, to make them holy, as he that has called and obliged them is holy.

The establishing of our own righteousness, then, here under censure, must never give any check to our endeavours for the "perfecting holiness in the fear of God. No; every one that names the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity," and strive still more and more to conform, as a purified member, to the holy Head of that body to which he belongs.

And therefore some might spare the task which they give themselves, to prove, with much solemnity, what I know no one who denies, that we are still obliged by the moral law, as our rule of life. Though sure they do not mean, that we are "debtors to keep the whole law," Gal. v. 3. so as to work our justification out of it. For then, to what end serves the faith of Christ, if still we be under the law, as slaves, to obey perfectly, or perish everlastingly? Why, Bellarmine will tell us, that "the gospel is the grace of the Spirit, given in the New Testament, making us able to fulfil the law."

And

And so far he says true, that all grace is thus given us ; but yet not given us to this end, that we should fulfil the law, so as to be thereby justified. For we have the grace, only to fulfil it in sincerity, but not to perfection. And yet if it be not to perfection, it cannot be to justification.

And should any question, how it can be to salvation, if not to justification? because we cannot be glorified till we are justified; and that which will serve the turn to save us, why should it not be thought available to justify us? I answer, the way of justification and of salvation is not the very same in every particular: but the gospel shews us a diverse method to effect the one and the other, and more to be done for this than for that. For God is said to justify the ungodly; but it is denied that he will save any, till they are made holy. Obedience is the condition of the new covenant, needful to salvation; to make those who are already heirs meet for their heavenly inheritance, i. e. not to give them a right to it, but fitting dispositions for it. But then justification cannot alike depend upon any works or obedience, because it is before them. And till a man is justified, he can do nothing that is of faith, nor good, and pleasing to God. So that the "obedience to righteousness," mentioned, Rom. vi. 16. I think cannot be meant of a righteousness to justification, but only of that righteousness which makes us holy in our conversation. Unless we take it for the "obedience of faith," Rom. xvi. 26. which will indeed avail to "justification of life." For it is to him who "worketh not, that his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5. And if he "worketh not," i. e. no works to justify him, but all his good works are purely the effects of God's grace and justification; how vain is it then to plead for any righteousness of works? Indeed we can never be justified "by them," though we must never look to be saved "without them."

Therefore

Therefore (in the positive part now) to “establish our own righteousness,” is to build and depend upon it, for our justification in the sight of God, and our acquittance and absolution from the law’s charge and accusation; to abide by it, as our plea, wherewithal to answer for ourselves in judgment; to stand to it in our last trial, at the tribunal of heaven: and the defence that we think then to make, why sentence of condemnation should not be pronounced upon us, because we have carried so fair, and done all things so well; therefore we not only hope to escape the punishment, but we lay claim to the reward; not for Christ’s sake, but for our works sake; not because he has satisfied and merited for us, but because we are so fit and worthy ourselves.

This I take to be the “establishing of our own righteousness.” But are there any so extravagant and senseless, as thus to erect all the fabric of their salvation upon such a rotten foundation? Yes, this was the way that the Jews took, St. Paul here tells us. And do not we find that we have many brethren still, though going under the Christian name, that keep up the very same humour, and plead their own goodness, as all in all to bring them off, when God shall enter into judgment with them? They seem to think themselves ready for him, let him come when he will, and that they are able to stand upon their own legs. And a justification by the satisfaction and merits of Christ Jesus, that is least in their thoughts, and seldom in their mouths, unless it be to shew the spleen and scorn with which they treat all such pretensions.

They plead all for justification only by works; though the Apostle tells us, Gal. ii. 16. “That a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.” Yea, he excludes all manner of works done by us, Tit. iii. 5. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done.”

"done." And therefore what St. James affirms of justification by any works, must not be understood of the same sort of justification as St. Paul pleads for. For as the former deals with vain men, puffed up with the conceit of their faith, and making slight account of works, when all their faith was nothing but the knowledge and profession of the gospel, or a notional assent to its truth, and verbal boasting of their believing; with which they took up, as sufficient. Such a bare speculation and acknowledgment of Christ, without any care to live to him, or to make the right use and benefit of him, he calls dead; and reckons it for none, as to the justifying and saving of the soul: for how could such a faith, fruitless, and no more than the faith of devils, justify or save? So (I say) he treats of a different kind of justification from that which St. Paul establishes: not of the justification of our persons in the sight of God, and before his judgment-seat; but of the justification of our faith in the sight of the world, and at the bar of our consciences; where (it is true) works must come in, to make good our pretensions to the holy Saviour of the world. For though faith justifies us, yet works declare us to have that faith; and though faith is the seal of our justification, yet works are the seal of our faith; and faith does the business, but works prove it to be done.

And I cannot agree with those, who, to invalidate the credit of St. Paul, bring him in speaking more darkly, and not so well advised; and would have St. James to come after, as his interpreter, to help him out, who (no doubt) was very well able to explain himself, and rightly to manage and apply his own doctrine, which he insists upon so statedly and largely; when St. James does but touch it collaterally and sparingly. And if we must question the authority of either, it should be rather of the last named; because his epistle has been sometimes called in doubt, and the other's never was. But I would

not offer to question either, as not authentic ; nor have we any need to go that way to work, when they are so easily reconciled, and all the clashing is only in appearance. For that St. James does not mean the justification of our persons before the Lord, is to me evident ; because he makes faith to have little or no concern in it ; which yet all that hear the scripture, must own to be a concause, at least, if not the only cause. Yea, because the allegation which he brings in, chap. ii. 23. would overthrow all his cause, if he intended the justification in God's sight. For " the scripture (says he) was fulfilled, which " faith, Abraham believed, and it was imputed to " him for righteousness ;" i. e. Abraham obeying God, in that difficult service, by offering up his only son, did make appear what was spoken of him in that scripture, and gave the evidence and verification of it, that his faith was imputed to him for justification ; though that justification was indeed many years before he made this attempt to sacrifice Isaac, and long before Isaac was born. And if Abraham was justified before he wrought the works, then he could not be justified by the works, unless it be in some other sense of justification. Whence it appears, that St. James speaks of the declarative justification. And so it is observable, how he makes his demand, (*δείξον μοι*) " Make appear, demonstrate, and shew me " thy faith," ver. 18. let me see such signs of it, that in the judgement of charity (though not of infallibility) I may conclude upon it, and so pronounce, as the Lord did in the case of Abraham, Gen. xxii. 12. " Now I know that thou fearest God : " though before the thing was not latent to me, yet now thou hast given a proof and manifestation of it, that thou hast not only a form of godliness, but the power. And thus thy faith is made perfect, i. e. shewed to be so ; as good fruits do not make, but they manifest, the tree to be good. And thus is the word used,

used, 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My strength is made perfect
"in weakness." For how can our weakness add
to God's almightiness, but only illustrate and glori-
fy it the more.

I do insist the longer here upon this, because many
seem so averse to take any notice of it; but still run
on to disprove the word of God, in proving, that
we are justified before him by our works. For to
set them up as the great plea, on which we mean to
hang all, when called to our last accounts, is not on-
ly to confute both these apostles, but to confront
the whole doctrine of the gospel; and very abhor-
rent from the sense of all true believers in the world;
even the very best of them; such as Job, who,
though he maintained his integrity against those that
calumniated and abused him, yet before the Lord he
cried, "How should man be just with God? If he
"will contend with him, he cannot answer him one
"of a thousand," chap. ix. 2, 3. And verses 30, 31,
32. "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make
"my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge
"me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor
"me. For he is not a man as I am, that I should
"answer him, and we should come together in judg-
"ment," chap. xl. 4, 5. "Behold, I am vile; what
"shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my
"mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not an-
"swer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further."
And, chap. xlii. 5, 6. "I have heard of thee by the
"hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.
"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and
"ashes." So David Psal. cxliii. 2. "Enter not in-
"to judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in
"thy sight shall no man living be justified." And,
Psal. cxxx. 3. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniqui-
"ties, O Lord, who shall stand?" And Daniel, chap.
ix. 7, 18. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto
"thee, but unto us confusion of faces. We do not
"present

“ present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.” And our Apostle, (if some do not think he lost his good sense, with his good conscience, upon his conversion,) 1 Cor. iv. 4. “ I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified.” And, Phil. iii. 9. “ I would be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness.” And even where he seems to be in a boasting humour, 1 Cor. xv. 10. “ I laboured more abundantly than they all:” he presently corrects himself; “ yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” And his “ fighting a good fight, finishing his course, and keeping the faith,” 2 Tim. iv. 7. what is it, but still a magnifying of the same grace discovered upon him, and working such sweet and happy effects in him, to prepare him, as an heir, for the heavenly inheritance? And so, indeed, as good works, and holy qualifications, are some rays of the divine countenance shining on our souls; yea, as they are some of the features of God’s own holiness, rendering us amiable to him, we may take pleasure and encouragement in them. And though hereupon the Apostle was confident of the “ crown of righteousness laid up for him;” yet he expected not that crown to be paid, but given to him, from God, indeed, as a righteous judge; not laying him down wages deserved for his services, but discharging a due to his own gracious promises, and dispensing out the largesse flowing from his infinite bounty; yea, crowning his own work, and his own righteousness. And so that “ right to the tree of life,” Rev. xxii. 14. is not of debt, but of promise, and the effect of Christ’s merit; with whom we are co-heirs, only as we are the “ children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

And when any holy men in Scripture plead their righteousness with God, as Psal. vii. 7. “ Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness;” and Isa.

Isa. xxxviii. 3. "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight;" we are not to understand it of the justification of their persons in general, but of some cause, or actions, or conduct in particular; and that but in comparison of their wicked enemies, between whom and themselves, they appeal unto God, as the Judge; though they cannot bear to have any thing that they do, tried in the strictness of his judgment. So the zealous fact of Phineas was "counted to him for righteousness," Psa. cvi. 31. And Rahab "was justified" when she had received and concealed the Messengers of God, James ii. 25. Not that the deed (though never so brave) could of itself justify such an ill woman; but it shewed, that God had wrought a work of faith and grace in her, or else she could never have done it: for she ventured her life in it, and so preferred the glory of God, and the love of the brethren, before her own life and safety. So Nehemiah prayed to be remembered of God, for some good service that he had done; though at the same time (as to his person and his whole life) he prayed, "Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy," chap. xiii. 22. So all the servants of God, that know themselves, instead of pleading merits, and claiming rewards, acknowledge guilt, and beg for mercy.

But we may stand amazed at it, and (with our Apostle, Gal. iii. 1.) ask, "Who has bewitched them," that any should fall from the grace of the gospel, so as to vilify Christ Jesus, and magnify their own works? "This only would I learn of you," (says he, ver. 2.) "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Are you more beholden to your own works, or to the faith of Christ, that still you "desire to be un-

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“der the law?” chap. iv. 21. A strange desire; that men should long to put their necks again under the intolerable yoke, and seem to be proud of the old chains! like those Israelites, who, in the same manner, expressed their thankfulness for their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage, by murmuring that they were not there, at the garlic and onions again. Strange! that they should seek righteousness and life from that law which discovers their nakedness, and strikes them dead! that they should think to force a way for themselves into heaven upon impossible terms! and to be justified by such works, as God’s Word tells us, “No man living, shall ever be justified by!” that they should still “despise that gracious covenant of God in Christ, and hanker after the law as a covenant of works! and where they cannot come up to the law, yet (still to make it serve the turn for their justification) they will bring the law down to them; and (as the Pharisees of old) they will adulterate the sense, and make it so feasible, that they may be justified by it, without hanging upon the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ Jesus; like the “many thousands of Jews,” Acts xxi. 20. “that believed, and were all zealous of the law.” But be they never so many, and never so zealous, the Apostle did not matter their numbers, nor their zeal; which, he says, was “not according to knowledge,” Rom. x. 2. But he roundly concludes, Rom. iii. 28. “That a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.” Those deeds (according to him) have no efficiency in the justification of a sinner before the God of heaven. And so saith our church (Serm. of Salvat.) “No man can, by his own acts, works, and deeds (seem they never so good) be justified, and made righteous before God. But every man, of necessity, is constrained to seek another righteousness or justification, to be received at God’s
“ own

“own hands.” And what is that, but the righteousness of Christ imputed? for it is in him, that God “reconciles the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” 2 Cor. v. 19. but saving them from the malediction of the law, for the satisfaction made by his Son; that satisfaction made by his death, which therefore, in this business, is chiefly respected by our faith. And though we believe in our commanding Lord, to follow him; yet it is in our dying Saviour, that we believe, to be justified by him. And faith makes us righteous before God, by thus bringing us into the possession of Christ’s righteousness; which becomes ours by an act of divine grace. And so, according to that of St. Bernard, “Man’s righteousness is God’s indulgence;” not a thing which he works by any doing of his own, but which he receives by favour from above.

Yet this doctrine will not be endured by them that are still for patching up a righteousness of their own, to do the work for their justification; and will not be beaten out of it, but that such tasks as they perform, and such hardness as they impose upon themselves, and such a life as they lead, must needs accomplish the business, to bring them off as clever as can be. Let Christ stand by the while, and do but make them a lane, and you shall see them run so excellently, that you cannot but own they deserve the prize. So do they swell with the conceit of their own services, as if they should not only make amends for all their sins, but oblige God to save their souls. Such a high rate do they put upon their doings, that they trust to them more than they do to their Saviour; and he shall only have the name; but the works they look upon as their real saviours. Instead of throwing down all at his feet, and looking for justification and acceptance only upon his account, he is last thought of,
and

and least of all regarded, in all the reckoning : and, if possible, they will shift and do the business without him.

This is the Pelagianism, born and bred in the corrupt nature of every lapsed sinner. And where they deserve to be damned, yet they are challenging to be saved ; and think themselves and their doings so considerable, that they wonder God takes no more notice of them, Isa. lviii. 3. " Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not ? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge." They think themselves forgotten, or not attended according to their high merits ; and begin to be angry and quarrel, if heaven be not paid them down, as the due desert of their works, and not as the purchase of the blood of Christ.

And herein some that are called Protestants, seem yet to be more Antichristian than Papists, *i. e.* greater opposers of the righteousness of Christ, and more haughty despisers of his merits and satisfaction, in the business of their own justification and salvation ; taking their own works to be satisfactory enough, without any satisfaction of his at all. And one would think, then, their works should be some very wonderful works, that they so stick to them, and lean upon them, and rate themselves by them : when, alas ! there is nothing to be discerned in them, above those of their ordinary neighbours. Yea, some that make such a noise and cracking of their probity and works, come exceedingly short of others, whom they so superciliously disdain, and cry out of, for plucking up all good works by the roots. And after all the do that they make to " establish their own righteousness," the attempt is most silly, and wicked, and dangerous.

1. It is a most silly attempt ; not only to set up that which really they have not ; all their righteousness, when it comes under a strict examination, being

ing even nothing, or not worth the speaking of; not only defective, but polluted; and (it may be) hardly so much as the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees: a pitiful business for men to trouble the world so much, in disputing and contending for! but it is to aim at unfeasible things, wherein they are perpetually baffled, and can make nothing of it. So saith the Apostle, of those here under censure, Rom. ix. 31. "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." They were hard in the pursuit (*Διωκων*) tugging at it all their days; and yet it would never do. And he tells where they missed it, and how they miscarried, next verse. *Wherefore?* how came it to pass that they were so wretchedly disappointed? why, because they sought "it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law." They were resolved to hew it out of their own doings, though that would not do; and they would not be persuaded to look unto Jesus by faith, to help them out.

And yet still, how frequently do vain men follow them here? and will never take warning, but build their castles in the air, and bestow all their labour in vain, to seek the living among the dead, and rich ore among heaps of dust, and dirt, and rottenness. For, before they are made alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, alas! all their very best works, what are they better than dead works, and such as St. Paul calls "lofs and dung?" And yet this is the worthy stuff about which they keep such a pother, in which they so much confide and glory, and upon which they so erect their plumes, and advance themselves; and call the righteousness of our Lord, imputed (in great scorn) *a putative righteousness*; yea, *cant*, and *mummery*; and the faith in our Lord's satisfaction, nothing but a sandy foundation. And nothing is more studiously loaded

with all their disgrace, than that only refuge, which all men in their wits will at last be glad to fly to; priding and justifying themselves in the "filthy rags," which are "abomination in the sight of God," Luke xvi. 15. and making but a mock of the only thing in the world that should save them: and still so void of good sense, as to mistake the covenant of grace, for a covenant of works; when as they are so widely different, that the voice of the one is, "Do this, and live;" and the voice of the other, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." They will, by all means, be under the covenant of works; none can keep them off it. And there they keep the clutter, to set up that righteousness; which no man ever did, or ever shall find sufficient. When, after all, the gayest of them is not arrayed like one of the humble lilies, that neither toil nor spin, to weave an impossible web (spider-like) out of their own bowels. Thus the foolish virgins may make a flourish with their lamps: though when the bridegroom comes, the oil will be wanting; that grace which now they do not think worth the providing; nay, that grace of the gospel, which they put from them, and will not admit of it; because their own righteousness must be thrown down, for this grace to be set above it. Thus the "god of this world" "blinds the eyes of them that believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 4. And though they so stand in their own light, to reject the only Saviour; yet they think they do well in it, and are very confident in the delusion. However, our Apostle labours to convince the world, that it is "of faith, and not of works;" still they go on to contradict; and are as flat and peremptory in it, that it is of "works, and not of faith."

2. This attempt of establishing their own righteousness, is no less wicked than silly. It is a confronting the plain declarations of the gospel; as if
nothing

nothing at all had been said, or they cared for never a word that our Lord speaks, to throw down all confidence in the righteousness of works, and to put men out of it, to take shelter in the righteousness of faith. How do they despise the wisdom of God in this gracious method of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus? and resist the authority of God, when he commands them to "believe in the name of his Son," to the saving of the soul? How do they trample the Son of his love, whom he gave to die as the propitiation for our sins, and not count him worthy to be relied on? Though he says, that believing in him shall secure us from perishing, and help us to "life everlasting," John iii. 16. yet they dare not trust to that, but think their own works are more to be trusted to, and that they have a better string to their bow. And so, like the Pharisees, Luke vii. 30. they "reject the counsel of God against themselves," and will have it their own way. Whatever he has said in his Word, if it do not jump with their preconceptions, and the systems that they have framed in their heads, it is all one to them, as if it had never been said. "The bread which came down from heaven, to give life unto the world," they set at nought, to feed upon the trash of their own imaginations; and "tread under foot the Son of God, and do despite to the Spirit of grace," in setting up a Paganish religion above all the gospel-revelation. And whom God hath sent "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24. and to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 26. him they have little respect to; but run on with their old ramble, of attaining happiness, even in the same way as the Ethnic philosophers taught; as if they had better light and information from them, than from all the revelation of Jesus Christ; and look upon all that he has introduced

introduced afterwards, as supervacaneous, and they could do even as well without it. For it is but to lead an honest, sober, and good life; and that they knew well enough without book, if he had said nothing to them in his gospel. But as to their believing him the only begotten Son of God, yea, Jesus Christ, over all, God blessed for ever; and that "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 5. and that he was "made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. In these, and such like mystical matters of faith, they leave him, and desire to be excused; and would be left to the latitudinarian liberty, and not imposed upon, *i. e.* Let him say what he will, they will believe what they list. And so not only Socinus or Crellius, but Socrates or Epictetus, is more their master, than Christ Jesus. And what more impudent, blasphemous usage of the blessed Saviour of the world, than so to fly in his face, instead of believing in his name? and if not downright denying, yet so rudely handling the Lord that bought them; for which we must leave him to deal with them, when he shall come to call such his enemies to account as "would not he should reign over them," nor give the law of faith, as well as of works, to them.

3. This establishing their own righteousness, is as dangerous and destructive to themselves, as it is silly and ungodly in itself. For thus do they turn themselves out of all the blessed benefits which come by the Redeemer of the world. Seeing "Christ is of no effect to them, whosoever are justified by the law; they are fallen from grace," Gal. v.

4. Why, what if they be? they may hope to do as well without grace, if they have but the moral works. *Sit anima mea cum philosophis* (in a sense worse than Averroes used it) they may wish themselves

selves with the old philosophers ; not so much to escape the scandalous lives, as the unintelligible faith of Christians. The Gentiles divinity is even as wholesome to them as the gospel ; nay, they find more edification in the honest Seneca, than in this mystery-monger, St. Paul. There they learn the brave, noble resolution, enough to make the worthy good man ; *unum bonum tibi fidere* ; not to hang and depend on any other, but confide and trust to thyself only. To live all upon their own stock, that is the happy life. But, O how will they get into that eternal life, where none but the righteous shall enter ? Why, they are righteous, square, and upright ; and that is enough for them. But I doubt, they will not find it enough to make them a title to the kingdom of heaven ; “ into which shall, in no wise, enter any thing that defileth,” Rev. xxi. 27. And is their righteousness without defilement ? Let them think as well as they will of themselves, I cannot think it is better with them, than with those people of God that complained, Isa. lxiv. 6. “ We are all “ as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses “ are as filthy rags.” And then where will they be, if they have no better than a filthy righteousness ; and never a holy Saviour, with his “ white “ raiment, to cover the shame of their nakedness ? ” Rev. iii. 18. He counsels to “ buy it of him.” But whether they will be contented so to do, I cannot tell. Their own principle (it is doubt) will lead them another way to work ; neither to buy, nor borrow, nor any way to fetch it from Christ Jesus, who alone can present them “ without spot and blemish,” Eph. v. 27. but only to clothe themselves with somewhat that is home-spun ; a righteousness made of their own works, *i. e.* (as the Apostle expresses it) they will “ go about to establish their own righteousnesses.”

And

And then, when the Lord shall come, and find them no better clad, however they may pride it in such apparel, I would not be found in their coat for all the world. O at what a fearful loss will they be, when all that shall utterly fail them, wherein alone they did put their trust! O in what a case will they be to appear before the holy Judge, in none but filthy rags! in what preparation to enter the place of everlasting purities, when they were never washed and cleansed in the "blood of the Lamb of God," nor would ever be persuaded and prevailed with to take that course; but trusted only to the poor matters that they did for themselves, and looked no further than the tattered, and blemished righteousness of their own!

O may they consider this, who have hitherto been setting up their rest in "works of righteousness" which they have done," though the Lord knows, what pitiful wretched stuff that is; and be well advised to look out yet further, before it be too late, that they may be better furnished! or else what wrong will the Lord do them, to take them, even as he finds them, and let them "eat of the fruit of" their own way, and be filled with their own devices?" Prov. i. 31. If he leave them under the first covenant of works, where themselves desired to be, they have but their own choice. And in the dreadful day of judgment, if he lay all their sins upon their own score, and afford them not a drop of that blood of Christ, which they disdained to apply, for the taking off any, how can they complain of hard dealing, though they bear their sin, and shame, and smart for ever? for they have fixed upon the first covenant, where there is no Mediator; and none they would have; no, they cared not for him, but reckoned to do well enough, though they never had him.

And

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And when we are "accepted only in the beloved;" and in him, they thought, there was no need for them to be found; O what acceptance can they expect at last! and what advocate to plead their cause? when their covenant requires perfect righteousness, and they have no such thing in them; and yet, for want of it, the condemnation will be just upon them. For God deals with them, but upon their own terms. And when he imputes their sins, and rejects their services, and reprobates their persons, and there is no surety to take up the matter, no Christ to screen them from the "wrath to come;" why, all this they have pulled upon their own heads: and it is no more than they had reason to look for, that the infinite scorn which they did cast upon the Redeemer of God's providing, should recoil, and for ever lie upon themselves; and that they who would "establish their own righteousness," and abide by it, should take what came of it; and be never the better for the Saviour, whom they would never betake themselves to, nor repose all their trust in him.

O take heed, Sirs, every one, who reads or hears this, that you sin not against your own souls, in sinning so against all the rich grace of the gospel; that you refuse not the best offer that ever can be made, of righteousness and salvation by the grace and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. For "how shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii. 3. There is the last refuge; and "there remains no more sacrifice for sin." If you fail here, you lose all, and are gone for ever, past all hope of help.

Yet, Lord, what a leaven is there in corrupt nature, that will be heaving and rising against this method, of passing by your own righteousness, to lay all your expectation and salvation upon the righteousness of another? But never do you fear to take
the

the way of God's opening to you, the way that he commands to be taken by you. O be more afraid of losing your share in the everlasting benefit! and suppress and beat down every cross imagination that exalts itself above this wisdom of God, that has so provided in Christ Jesus for the salvation of the poor sinful world.

If "where sin has reigned unto death," God will have "grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 21. O let it so reign! and do you rejoice in it, and greatly bless him for it; and withstand not the comfort, the heavenly hope, the everlasting consolation, which this brings to every believing soul. O do not, what in you lies, frustrate the death of Christ, and your own best evidence for eternal life, both together. "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," Gal. ii. 21. and if the satisfaction made by his death do not establish a righteousness on which to ground your sure hopes of blessedness, I know not how any righteousness of your own will ever be able to bear that superstructure.

O it is not in yourselves, Sirs, but "in the Lord," that you have righteousness; and in him shall all "the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isa. lxxv. 24, 25. And it is not by any obedience of your sinful selves, but by the obedience of God's holy One, that you are to be made righteous, (thus righteous in his sight,) Rom. v. 19. Never dare then to stand a trial in the court of the law; for there you will be sure to be cast and lost; but repair and fly to the chancery of the gospel; and take sanctuary under the covert of the Lord your righteousness and your Redeemer. O catch hold of the horns of that altar; and let nothing pluck you thence; but there set up your rest: and "the life which you now live, let it be by the faith of the Son of God,"
"that

“ that loved you, and gave himself for you,” Gal. ii. 20. And let not the works done by you, but Christ in you, be your “ hope of glory,” Col. i. 27. nor let any thing of your own, or any thing else in the world, be so much your rejoicing, as that: Isa. lxi. 10. “ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul “ shall be joyful in my God. For he hath clothed “ me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” There is the *decus et tutamen*, indeed: and that is a clothing complete, which will both adorn you, and secure you. It will make you easy and comfortable now, and most glorious and blessed for ever. And then, instead of “ establishing your own righteousness,” you will be established on so sure a foundation, where you shall never be put to confusion, but be kept through faith to salvation; and enjoy the blessed end of your faith, in all the endless joys of everlasting life.

The third observation.

What a hinderance is pride to their happiness, who stand upon their own terms, and will “ not “ submit to the righteousness of God;” they will not have it in his way, and they shall not have it in their own.

“ Have not submitted themselves.” No, here it struck with the Jews; they could not bring themselves to it. It seemed too great a condescension and abasement, for them, who, gloried so much in their law, as written with the finger of God, to go and seek their justification any where else. And as much goes it still against the grain, with such as dote upon the great Diana, their reason; and think there can be nothing superior to that law, which the same God has inscribed on the tables of their hearts. To be convinced, that this will not do, but they must stoop to a new remedy, to help them out; here pride of their own natural stock makes them so stiff,

and stand it out even to the death, against any thing that shall come to humble, and pull them down from the high opinion that they have of themselves. This they make the hideous outcry against, as a design to unman them, and to rob them even of themselves. If the gospel comes to cast down (Λογισμῶς) their reasonings, or "imaginations, and every high thing" that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, "and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 5. they are resolved to keep their manly perfection, and thank ye, heartily; they will not so tamely part with their natural accomplishments, which are not only their treasure, but their glory. If St. Paul, and the rest of the apostles, (poor deluded creatures!) would be such "fools for Christ," 1 Cor. iv. 10. yet they have no mind to take that course, to learn wisdom, which he prescribes, chap. iii. 18. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." The wisdom of this world, though it be no better than "foolishness with God," ver. 19. it makes head against God's way of saving sinners, and counts it but a silly contrivance, even "the foolishness of God," chap. i. 25. And the world, with all its "wisdom, knows not God," ver. 21. i. e. not in the right saving manner. Though they know enough from his creation, to leave them without excuse, Rom. i. 20. yet they "become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened," ver. 21. and they will not vouchsafe to learn the knowledge of God from his word; not to know "God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. v. 19. nor to know Christ Jesus, "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. though this be the most material and best of all knowledge that
ever

ever they can attain to, which the great and learned Apostle was so taken with, that he "determined to "know nothing else" among that people, "but Jesus Christ and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. and "counted all things but loss, for the excellency of "the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord," Phil. 3. 8. and a branch of this knowledge there, he makes to be the knowing of such a "righteousness as comes "by the faith of Christ:" yet neither this knowledge, nor this righteousness, will down with them: because their school of nature does not teach it, they stand up therefore to oppose it; and, instead of submitting to it, they perk above it; and by all means would batter it down, as not fit to subsist, or be mentioned in the world, unless with the utmost scorn and defiance.

And here some of our refiners, that may think themselves much disparaged, to be coupled with Quakers, yet shew that they are not at such a mighty distance, but they can lovingly shake hands together; for what the one call reason, the other call the light within; whereby they mean, in effect, the same thing which both of them set up above the Christ without, not only to vie with him, but to over-top, and so exclude him; and so lean to their own understandings, and so abide by their own imaginations, as to control his holy word, instead of being controlled by it.

Now, pride keeps men off from "submitting to "the righteousness of God," 1. Because they will not be so beholden to another. 2. Because they have too high a conceit of their own righteousness. And, 3. Because they have not thoughts low enough of their sinful wretchedness.

1. They are not for "submitting to the righteousness of God," out of pride, which will not suffer them to be so beholden to another. To go out of themselves, and fetch home righteousness from one,

one, whom (it may be) they look upon but as their fellow-creature; this is such a poor, precarious sort of living, as they count exceedingly below them. To be "made the righteousness of God in Christ," 2 Cor. v. 21. and to be perfect only "through the comeliness that he puts upon us;" to be decked with borrowed plumes, and not "accepted but in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6. to be "justified by faith in him," Acts xiii. 39. and "believing, to have life through his name," John xx. 31. All this looks pitiful sneaking for men of parts, and men of worth, so to degrade themselves, and become such underlings to they know not whom. If now and then any of them bow the head, in a customary formality, to the name of Jesus; yet they are not for so bowing their souls to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be "found in him, having the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, i. e. the righteousness of God," Phil. iii. 9. But as Herod and his men of war set our Saviour at nought, and mocked him, when arrayed in another's coat, Luke xxiii. 11. so these myrmidons make but a jest of one clothed in that "white raiment," which the Lord counsels us to get of him. Like as a proud gentleman, though decayed, insists still upon his quality, and this and the other he scorns, and would keep up his port, and be as great as ever, when yet (poor man!) he has nothing to support and maintain the dignity; and so but makes himself the more contemptible, in refusing the helps which he might have, and aiming at the high things which he can make nothing of. Just such wise gentlemen in religion are they, that value themselves upon the pedigree and endowments of their rational nature, (however sunk and vitiated;) and will be so much men, that they cannot find in their hearts to be Christians, because they will be independent upon Jesus Christ, and so set up for themselves, that they need not truckle

truckle to him. No they would not have you think, that it is yet so low with them, to come "labouring and heavy laden" to him, and to cast their burden upon him. He came to seek and to save "the lost." True; but they are none of those. He shall stay for their submission, till they think it time to acknowledge that. And they shall stay for his salvation, till they do come down so to see and own it. For such rich ones, so full of themselves, he "sends empty away;" and scorns the proud beggars, as much as they scorn the only Saviour. He chuses the "poor of this world, rich in faith," James ii. 5. which to them is such a kind of fanciful wealth, as only serves them to make themselves merry with. The "poor in spirit" he pronounces "blessed," and sure of his kingdom, Matth. v. 3. But these overweening admirers of themselves are too high-spirited, to take the kingdom of heaven as his sole purchase, and God's free gift: they will not be so base, to wear it, till they have won it: they are so high and lofty, as to soar up, and fly upon it, by the strength of their own noble faculties. And then what need to "kiss the Son," and all this cringing to Jesus Christ? Faith is the abasing and self-emptying grace, that sends us away, out of ourselves, to the "Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. therefore he that will not give his glory to another, will yet trust it to faith, rather than to any thing else that is in us: for it is a receiving from without; "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord; and receiving the atonement, and abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness," by him, and from him. It is the poor empty pitcher that we carry, to be replenished out of his infinite fulness; our "looking to Jesus," as the Israelites to the brazen serpent; our coming to Christ, who calls us to him; and "flying for refuge to the hope set before us," Heb. vi. 18. being "made righteous by the obedience of another,"

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“ther,” Rom. v. 19. another fulfilling the law for us, and in us. And this our faith is “imputed to us for righteousness, as Abraham’s was,” Rom. iv. 24. but the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us for our justification.

It is (*ſæda execranda, pernicioſa, deteſtanda*) a filthy, cursed, baneful, abominable doctrine, faith Socinus. The man was so full of bitterness and vengeance against the only way of his salvation, he pours out, as if he knew not what to say bad enough of it.

And hence we may learn, at what fountain the wild sect among us have been dabbling, when W. P. and G. W. (in the Serious Apology, p. 148.) “pronounce, in the name of the Lord, justification by the righteousness which Christ fulfilled in his own person for us, wholly without us, to be the doctrine of devils, and an arm of the sea of corruption, which does now deluge the whole world.” Such blasphemy cannot be less harsh and hideous in all believers ears, than this kind of justification was in theirs. But when are these exalters of themselves like to come down out of their altitudes, to fetch in righteousness from another, though it be from the SON of GOD himself? However the Scriptures tell us of “the unfearchable riches of Christ,” Eph. iii. 8. all the inscrutability to them is, that they know not what to make of such treasures. And though the same Scriptures draw us to the great “Author and Finisher of our faith,” and throw us upon him as our life and our all, “in whom dwells all fulness,” Col. ii. 10. yet to come unto Christ, as poor bankrupts, that have not a mite of our own; in us no good thing to recommend us unto God; but expecting all from him (as is the guise of faith and humility;) to confess we are unclean, and weak, and lost, and dead; and that Christ is our righteousness, our strength, our Saviour, and our Redeemer; yea, that we are worse than

than nothing without him, and that we have all things given us only with him, and in him : and if it is not our free will, but his free grace, that makes us to differ, how ill then will it beseem us to arrogate the glory of our Lord to ourselves? but, O! when will they so magnify Christ, and, as Rev. v. 13. think “ the Lamb worthy to receive all glory,” and in all things to have the pre-eminence, who are readier to side with the malevolent factions of proud rebels, that would spoil him of his Deity, his dominion, his satisfaction, and his righteousness, as the meritorious cause of our justification? of whose righteousness (in this case) and of that only, all his humble retainers do make mention; and take all their happiness, as purchased by him, and not at all deserved by them. But this the enemies of grace, and the undervaluers of Christ Jesus, will never endure; because it spoils all the glorying and triumph in any thing of their own, whereof they are still so fond, and have it in admiration above all. And thus,

2. Pride hinders mens submitting to the righteousness of God, by the high conceit they have of their own righteousness, as that which they think may pass very well, and serve the turn, without looking any further. Christ’s righteousness, which is completely perfect, they put away from them; but their own, they would have imputed to them, as perfect, which is so extremely short of perfection; and seem confident also in the opinion, that God (whose judgment is according to truth) will yet make the same erroneous computation as they do. No doubt, but Paul himself, before his conversion, supposed such a sufficiency in his own righteousness, though, when grown a better man, he was less assuming; and, instead of depending upon any righteousness of his own for justification, disclaimed it all, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Phil. iii. 9. And here he blames

his countrymen, for going about that idle, wretched design, "to establish their own righteousness."

But the sons of pride are quite of another opinion. And what righteousness (say they) should a man set up, but his own? would you have him to live upon an airy fantastical thing, that is none of his own? what good is that which is another's like to do him? Though an unclean leper should be spruced up in fine clothes, and a sinful creature covered with the mantle of a Redeemer, what the better? yea, what need has he to look out abroad, who is well provided at home? "All these have I kept from my youth up," said that forward young man, *Matth. xix. 20.* Thus do many still stand stroaking themselves, and admiring the lives that they have lived; and seem to entertain this conceit of themselves, that they can deal with all the commands of God. And though they cannot (for open shame) but acknowledge some faults and failings in their obedience; yet, where they cannot stretch out their righteousness, to hold measure with the command, that is exceeding broad, there they will contract the command, so as to make it stand commensurate, and even no more than equal to their righteousness, by their worthy doctrine of acceptilation; that counterfeit coin stamped in the Socinian mint, without any royal authority of Heaven, not upon the foundation of Holy Scripture, but their own fond conjecture; and all on purpose to evacuate and supersede the merit and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ; that there may be no need of this, or any other compensation ever to be made to the justice of Heaven, but only the sinner's own repentance; which they take a deal of pains to prove sufficient, without faith in the Son of God. But still all their reasonings are without book, and run only on such a bare presumption as that of the Ninevites, *Jonah iii. 9.* "Who can tell if God will turn and repent," and

“ and turn away from his anger, that we perish “ not ? ” *q. d.* we do not know but God may absolve and justify us, upon our bare repentance : but we have no assurance that he will. For to all the plausible allegations that raise our hopes, there are startling replications, to strike us down with fears ; and no certainty ever to be had, but only from the divine revelation ; and that (we are sure) does require not only “ repentance towards “ God,” but also “ faith towards our Lord Jesus “ Christ,” Acts xx. 21. And wherever repentance is singly named, yet faith must be supposed : for no true repentance, without godly sorrow ; and no godly sorrow, but what flows from the sense of God’s love ; and what sense of his love, but through faith in the Beloved of his soul ? for whose sake alone it is, that the holy, righteous God, is friends with believing sinners ; and not only kind, but “ just, to justify the believers on Jesus,” Rom. iii. 26. The just Judge of all the earth was not to be instructed by these wise men, upon what terms to take sinners into favour. No : he has taken that way of satisfaction, which does not at all like them. Their master, who declares, “ he would not believe “ a thing, because God says it, but because his own “ reason discerns the truth of it,” is bold to give out, “ that though this were expressly said, over “ and over in Scripture, Christ Jesus satisfied God “ for our sins, he would not believe it.” How then can we expect that they should be determined by the tantamount terms of “ propitiation, atone- “ ment, ransom, redemption through his blood,” (*Δύτρον*,) the price given for our freedom (*Αἰσιλυτρον*) undergoing a like infliction, as was to light on the delivered ; and “ the just suffering for the unjust ? ” But whether they be pleased with it or no ; God has better consulted the honour of his law, and taken more care to keep up the authority of his government,

by an inexorable justice done upon the Surety, that stood in the sinner's stead, though that Surety were no less than the dear Son of his eternal love.

And though they that judge of God's ways without God's Word, are of opinion, that there was no need of a propitiation for their sins; yet he has declared himself to be otherwise minded; that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. Nor is it any manner of blood that will serve the turn neither: "For it is not possible the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," chap. x. 4. no, nor any sort of human blood; not "the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul;" but it must be "the precious blood of Christ," as of a Lamb without blemish, and "without spot," 1 Pet. i. 19. "the blood of Christ, through the eternal Spirit, so offering himself to God," Heb. ix. 14. And by that "offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. It is not their own sanctification, but his oblation, that gives them the perfection. For God is well pleased in his holy Son, that never did displease him, and pleased with the offending children of the Messiah, only for his sake.

It is true, he does "accept the willing mind," according to what they have, where the power of performing is wanting, 2 Cor. viii. 12. But then that acceptance must be understood to be ever "in the Beloved," through his merits, and upon his account. And good is the advice which St. Cyprian gives to all, *Nec quisquam sic sibi blandiatur, de puro et immaculato corde, ut innocentia sua fretus, medicinam non putet esse adhibendam vulneribus.* "Let no one entertain such a high conceit of the cleanness of his heart, nor so value himself upon his integrity, as to imagine, that he has no need of cure for his wounds, to be healed with the stripes of his Saviour." But to this refuge, the high and lofty Socinians,

cinians, and some of their associates, think there is no necessity to have recourse. No; they expect their own righteousness shall do greater feats for them, than all the righteousness of Christ. They will dare to plead their cause, and defend themselves, without him; as he said, the Pharisees did, Luke xvi. 15. "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men." They have it still, that all is done well enough by them, to make up a righteousness sufficient to do their business. And might not one then expect some superexcellent virtue in their righteousness above other mens, in which they have such high confidence to do such mighty matters? when, alas! it is not a jot better for all the presumption; only themselves are still much the worse, so to contend and struggle it out, even with God himself, in their own justification. When thus they swell their molehills into mountains, they shall be mountains, indeed, big enough to stand in their way, to keep them from Christ, though not high enough to raise them to his heaven. No; he told such justifiers of themselves, who were so opinioned of their own worth and goodness, Matth. xxi. 31. that "publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of heaven before them." For such noted sinners will sooner be convinced, and come to repentance, and to faith in Christ, and so to heaven. But pride destroys even all that good which the others pretend to; and they are nothing sincere in it: for, behold his soul, "which is lifted up, is not upright in him," Hab. ii. 4. Such as stand so much upon their own endowments and abilities, will hardly ever "submit to the righteousness of faith. How can ye believe" (faith our blessed Lord) "who receive honour one of another?" John v. 44. And nothing hinders so much, as the honour which men think belongs to them for their righteousness: for it is not so much wealth, or parentage, or parts, that commends a man, as good-
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ness does. This they look therefore most to be praised for, as owing all to themselves. *Propter virtutem jure laudamur, et in virtute recte gloriamur: quod non contingeret, si donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus.* Tull. This redounds so much to our honour (say the patrons of nature) because we have not this probity, as an infused quality; but we draw it out of our own treasure.

The disputers of this world are thus for wrangling themselves out of the righteousness of God; and there is no end of their cavils against it. While "it pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to "to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. they that are so conceited of their own righteousness, will never lose all the crop of praise and glory which they expect from it, to throw it down, as refuse stuff, at the feet of Christ Jesus. No; the very arguing of the Apostle for the righteousness of faith, that it "excludes boasting," even that fills them with such prejudice against it: Rom. iii. 27. "Where is "boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of "works? nay, but by the law of faith." And therefore are they so much against this faith, because it is so much against this boasting trade. As the Jews could not tell how to imagine, that the Gentiles, which "followed not after righteousness, "should attain to righteousness," when themselves that "followed after the law of righteousness "missed it," Rom. ix. 30, 31. so our Judaizing sort of Christians will never be persuaded, that the righteousness of faith, which they think too easily come by to be honest goods, should do more than all the laborious righteousness which they hew out and fabricate themselves. How merry can they make themselves with St. Ambrose his adumbration of Christ's imputed righteousness, by Jacob's recommending himself to his father, and carrying away the blessing, in his elder brother's clothes, of which he

he so well liked the perfume? I know the mighty disdain with which they look upon this righteousness; so that if they found it lying even in the way, they would scorn to take it up, unless to ridicule and expose it.

For the doctrine of imputation has, of some late years, grown a jest and derision, which ever before was owned and defended by all the most celebrated divines of our church, as the only orthodox opinion. One of the greatest and best of them that ever this church had, was not ashamed to build all his hopes of heaven upon it. And in one of his devout addresses to the MAJESTY on high, thus, does that sweet finger of our Israel, give his sense of the matter :

*Hungry I was, and had no meat :
I did conceit a most delicious feast ;
I had it straight, and did as truly eat,
As ever did a welcome guest.
I owed thousands, and much more ;
I did believe that I did nothing owe,
And liv'd accordingly ; my creditor
Believes so too, and lets me go.
When creatures had no real light
Inherent in them, thou did't make the sun
Impute a lustre, and allow them bright,
And in this shew what Christ has done.*
HERBERT of Faith.

But now (as a champion for the opposite part told me) since the thirty-nine articles were compiled, there has been a turn in our affairs. I suppose it may be, from the faith of the gospel; to the admired theology of old nature. And the divines that are ambitious to be thought modish, discourse now with quite another air, than what lies so plain in

in the articles of our faith and religion, which smell too much of the Cranmerian reformation. And therefore they make use of them only as a key, by which they are fain to enter into the church; but as soon as they have got possession, fall to preach them down, without mercy, as the greatest absurdity.

Though all this while, the self-righteousness in which they so ruffle and glory (God knows) is none of the thing which they would have taken it for, but a sorry, ragged, patched covering, not only full of cracks and flaws, but of such deficiencies and impurities, that it will never abide the test of God's holy, righteous law. And the highest pretenders to it are many times the least partakers of it, Prov. xxx. 12. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." We know of one, that was as much his own spokesman as any of them, and set off himself in all the fine trappings of his own righteousness, Luke xviii. yet the success which he found does little encourage others to follow his trade: for his fellow-worshipper, that took quite a contrary course (though looked upon as a worse man) yet fared much better. The publican, that scarce durst look up to heaven, but "smote on his breast," and had nothing to say for himself, but, "God, be merciful to me a sinner, went down to his house justified, rather than the other," ver. 14. Yet, O how many still are for keeping up the Pharisee's humour! And, alas! what is all the best righteousness they so much stand upon? What, but some common honesty, sober living, upright dealings, observation of some prayers, kindness to the poor, fair and plausible carriage to all? Things, it is true, very commendable in themselves; but yet such virtues as were found in many of the Heathens; and peradventure, in a greater measure than these righteous men

men do now possess them. But still this is too short for the cover, and too weak for the cure of a sinful soul. All this while here may be no regeneration, no principle of new life, no heart right with God, no Spirit of Christ, none of the true holiness, without which no seeing the Lord. Instead of having these, they may reject them, as unnecessary preciseness : or though all these were indeed superadded, yet still they are in such imperfection here, that the very best of mortal saints do see the continual need they have to fly unto Christ's merit and satisfaction, to help them out. But they that set up the righteousness of works, in opposition to the righteousness of faith, are so puffed and swollen with the proud conceit of their own righteousness, that they look upon it as full enough, and acquiesce in it, without seeking any further. And what need they any foreign righteousness, derived from the Saviour, when "in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him?" Acts x. 35. To which I shall here return Beza's remark upon that place : That, among the Hebrews, the fear of God, imported the whole of his worship ; and, because without faith, it is impossible to please God ; it appears therefore, that Cornelius (to whom this refers) though a Roman born, and now a Profelyte of the Gate, yet before his baptism, or his particular knowledge of Jesus to be the true Messias, he was one of those faithful, who believed in Christ to come. I only add, that none being accepted but in the Beloved, we must therefore conclude, that he was called, and endued with the Spirit and faith of Christ : and so God approved of him, for that which by his own grace, he had wrought in him. Yea, whosoever truly fear him, they do look upon him as propitious, and believe, that "there is forgiveness with him," Psal. cxxx. 4. and therefore we we may suppose, that he "reveals his Son in them,"
and

and gives them that faith, without which none can be pleasing in his sight, Heb. xi. 6.

But they that presume they can do well enough without the Messiah's help, now that he is come, if they were not too high to regard our Apostle, I should mind them of his wholesome admonition, Rom. xii. 3. "I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." But still he talks so much of grace and faith, instead of works and self-righteousness, that he is not like to be heard by them, who are all for their own things, and therefore so much admire them, as better than any, because they are their own. Though herein they stand so much in their own light, as to withstand their justification in God's sight: for the righteousness that indeed justifies us, must be complete, and must exclude boasting; and theirs has neither of these qualifications; therefore cannot avail to their justification. No; this is to be had another way; the way which they scorn to take, Acts xiii. 39. For "by the Son of God, all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

And there is a greater obstacle still in their way; and that is,

3. The want of low thoughts and humble sense of their own unrighteousness, and sinful wretchedness.

They never yet well knew themselves, or else they would have better learned Christ. They overlook, or else palliate, the grand apostacy; and therefore they have such slight thoughts of their recovery. As much as they do own of the natural corruption, they rather make it the excuse of their sins, than any matter of their humiliation. Pelagians and Socini-

ans,

ans, that make so light of the fall of man, and the distemper of our nature, to make as light of the help and remedy; and fancy that any quacking receipts, and home-spun righteousness, will do for such an inconsiderable ailment. And as for the righteousness of Christ imputed, (that shadow of a dream,) they will sooner deride it, than ever desire it.

One of them, that pretends, in a late book, to correct all such extravagant errors with a high hand, well begins his account of Christianity, with the inquiry after Adam's fall. But I cannot think that he has given the world any good satisfaction, as to our sad losses in Adam, when he makes no more of all, but that we became mortal, and must die, and cease to be; and appeals to the common sense of men, that by death, is meant no more than the extinction of life, and not a living in misery.

Now, if he perceive no worse hurt by the fall, yet he should not be angry with those that do groan under more grievous effects, and feel the old aches and mischiefs, the wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores all over to this very day; the darkness to truth; the dulness to good; the proneness to evil; the listlessness to healing; and even resistance of a cure; all which they cannot take to be any part of his work, who made all things very good; and therefore must lay the blame lower than at his door, and yet higher than the actual transgressions of the particular persons so ill affected. For that they appear to be thus vitiated, even before habits by their actions can be contracted; yea, to be "shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin," Psal. li. 5. and to bring such a corrupt nature with them into the world, as makes them the "children of wrath," Eph. ii. 2. and sure God would not be so offended at them, if they were but even as he made them, and there were no more to be objected against them, but that now they were become subject to the calamity

mity of mortality. Alas! we are told quite another thing, from more authentic writings; Rom. v. 19. That "by one man's disobedience many were made" (not only sufferers, but) sinners;" and ver. 18. that "by the offence of one man, judgment came" upon all men to condemnation." And who that has well studied the holy scriptures, can take this condemnation to be no more than a temporal death? However the Right Reverend expounder's new and soft sense of God's wrath and damnation may as much oblige the Socinian tribe, as his opposition in other matters has distressed them; yet here I must beg leave to dissent from him and them. Though we know what is commonly meant by death in man's law, he must be a great stranger to the law of God, that thinks no more to be meant by it there, where wicked men are threatened, that "if they live" after the flesh, they shall die," Rom. viii. 13. and asked, "why shall they die," for what of turning? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Why, let them live after the flesh or not, or though they turn to the Lord, they shall be sure however to die the natural death of the body. Sin, whether finished or unfinished, brings forth this death. There must be a further death meant therefore, James i. 15. even that cursed state, Gal. iii. 10. and that hell, which is made the portion of the wicked, Psal. ix. 17. which must intend a punishment beyond the grave: for into this all shall be turned, though they live never so godly, Psal. lxxxix. 48. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? but some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2. And therefore, for all our Sadducees haste, when they die, there is not an end of them; nor does the immortal soul then prove mortal too, (at which their doctrine seems to drive;) but they will be heard of again in a life of misery, which holy scripture calls the "second death," Rex. xxi. 8. "The lake which
" burns

“ burns with fire and brimstone, is the second death.
“ And they shall be tormented day and night, for
“ ever and ever,” chap. xx. 10. Such as are condemned by the Judge eternal, “ shall go away into
“ everlasting punishment,” Matth. xxv. 46. And our church is very express, (Hom. of Nat. and Pass.) that “ man, by the fall, is not only become mortal,
“ but a lump of sin, a bond-slave to the devil;
“ are probate, cast-way, and fire-brand of hell; and,
“ by the just judgment of God, condemned to everlasting death.” Our Lord Jesus then did not come into the world, only to preserve men from non-entity, that they might not drop into nothing, but “ to deliver us from the wrath to come,” 1 Thess. i. 10. This most dreadful everlasting judgment of God, is his wrath poured out upon “ the vessels of
“ wrath fitted to destruction,” Rom. ix. 22. which, to save us from, was an errand and achievement indeed worthy the blessed Son of God to come into the world upon. And they that take no notice of this, unless to contradict and cavil against it, if their law and their physic be no better than their faith and divinity, the world might not much be damnified, though they should scorn any further to oblige it with their practice. We see, the knowledge of bodies and worldly estates does not presently give a man insight into the things that depend upon divine revelation. No; there is an unguent, which all their philosophical skill in nature cannot discover: and yet it helps even the illiterate to know all things pertaining to salvation, better, and more to the purpose, than many rabbies and scholars, that so much scorn and despise them; and that is “ the unction
“ from the holy One,” 1 John ii. 20. a learning that makes them know themselves, and their woful need of a Saviour; and makes them cry to him, in the anguish of their souls, (as ready to sink and drop into hell,) “ Lord, save us, or we perish:” we
are

are " undone for ever," if thou be not our " strength and our Redeemer." When so many that seem much above them, are still of the Laodicean temper, Rev. iii. 17. to say, they are " rich," " and increased with goods, and have need of no thing; and know not, that they are wretched, " and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." They believe not a word, what our church, (according to the holy scriptures,) Art. ninth, teaches, that " man is so very far gone from original righteousness, that the fault, corruption, and infection of " nature in every person born into the world, deserves God's wrath and damnation:" and that therefore we can never think to ingratiate ourselves with the Majesty offended, by offering any thing of our own. But, as it is, (Art. eleventh,) " We are " counted righteous before God, only for the merit " of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by our " faith; and not for our own works and deservings."

The rueful work which sin has made in our souls, to throw us into a state, not only of strangeness to God, but of enmity against him, batters down all the pride and confidence of such as seriously ponder and lay it to heart. And when we are once soundly convinced of our sin and misery, what a holy Majesty we have offended, and what an intolerable punishment we have deserved, sure we shall not presume, then, that we can save, as we have destroyed, ourselves; but shall be glad to take our reconciliation, as a precious favour, at the hands of that Almighty Saviour, on whom God has laid our " help, " being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." Rom. iii. 24.

But men at ease, and never yet pinched and distressed with the grievous pressure of their sins, and God's deserved plagues, are no competent judges of these matters, whatever otherwise are their abilities.

In

In the heat of contention, they will rather scoff at them; and play with them, than put in for their share in the blessed benefit of God's providing. They are subtle, and tortuous, and endless, in opposing the righteousness of God. Their stout stomachs know not how to admit of it. They will seek all subterfuges in the world to avoid it. And if they can find any lurking hole elsewhere, they will never come upon their submission to Christ Jesus.

Indeed it is the great work of the Spirit of God; so to bring down the soul, and to "convince the world of sin, as well as of righteousness," John xvi. 9, 10. by a deep humiliation, to prepare men heartily to yield unto God's method of justification; to "stop every mouth," and lay "all the world guilty before him," Rom. iii. 19. to make them abhor themselves, and subscribe to the justice of Heaven, pronouncing damnation upon their sins; and make them renounce all hope of relief from any righteousness of their own, and to depend all upon the "Lord their righteousness," for justification in God's sight.

"The whole need not a physician," but the sick at heart will be glad to hear of help. After they have been harrassed with the terrors of the law, and pulled down with the spirit of bondage, and the conscience of sin has brought them to see, what a "fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," then they will know how to prize the grace of the gospel, and the blessed news, that calls them to believe in him, that has satisfied the precept, and undergone the penalty of the law for them. When they have been groaning under the sore oppression, they will have little list to resist the heavenly grace, which bids them "cast their burden on the Lord." Guilt awakened, makes men highly concerned; and indeed only the convinced sinner

is capable to let this grace sink down into his heart. Such as are pricked at heart, bowed and broken with the burden of sin, will haste away for "refuge to the hope set before them," and look to Jesus, as the wounded did to his type, Numb. xxi. 9. Such as know God's glorious holiness, and their own sorry righteousness, will despair of themselves, and never venture, with their briers and thorns, upon a consuming fire.

But, who so bold as they that are yet in their natural blindness, "in whom the God of this world" "has blinded the eyes of them that believe not?" 2 Cor. iv. 4. I cannot but call it blindness, for all their parts and learning: for Paul was not inferior to the best of them, for natural and acquired abilities; and yet could he see nothing of this righteousness, till humiliation had pulled down his heart, and conversion had opened his eyes. And he tells us, that "the natural man" (let him be never so profound for his politics, or mighty in his philosophy) "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, "for they are foolishness to him; neither can he "know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 4. Cannot: and wherefore? (I beseech ye;) what is too hard for them to know, who think they see and comprehend all? Why, here he has posed them, who was the most experienced person on both sides, and knew what could be done by the strength of nature, and what men can never have a sight of, without a spiritual eye, and God's grace, and light from above; to give them (as he expresses it, like himself, Eph. i. 17, 18, 19.) "the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge "of our Lord Jesus Christ: the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they may "know what is the hope of his calling, and what "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the "saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his "power

“ power to themward that believe.” This is a knowledge so sublime, that none of the great masters of reason, with all their sharpness, can attain to; and, therefore, are so apt to speak evil of what they understand not, because they were never yet thrown down, like Paul, and never “ taught of “ God,” and have not “ heard and learned of the “ Father, to come unto Christ,” John vi. 45. and so as yet they see no need of “ submitting themselves to the righteousness of God;” nor will they do it, till brought better to understand their own vileness and accursedness, till they have got that eye-salve to clear their sight, Rev. iii. 18. and (after all their boasted virtues) come to learn of Christ that meekness and lowliness of heart which would set them upon deploring the depravation and pollution of their nature, the deceitfulness and wickedness of their hearts, and those deadly wounds and damnable maladies of their souls, that require no less a remedy than the blood of Jesus, and the great salvation wrought by the SON OF GOD. In the sense of which, O how well for them, if they would turn the proud boasting of their good deeds into humble bewailing of all their sins, and be taught of God himself, Ezek. xx. 43. to remember their “ ways and their doings, and loath themselves in “ their own sight;” yea, chap. xvi. 63. so “ remember, and be confounded, as never to open “ their mouths any more,” to speak one word in any self-vindication.

Thus I have shewed, how, for pride, it is that men stand off from “ submitting themselves to the “ righteousness of God.”

And now I would admonish all whom I can prevail with :

1. Not to have these men so in admiration, as to espouse their opinion for the way of righteousness. .

2. Not

2. Not to count a righteousness of your own needless to be possessed of, because you have need of another to trust in.

3. Yet, after you have done your best, submit to the righteousness of God, as ever you would have peace with God.

1. Admire not the exalters of their own righteousness, as likeliest to lead you into the way of righteousness, as if, true goodness lay all on their side, and you must needs be with them to find it: for there, peradventure, you may sooner find snakes in the grass, yea, and infidels in the dark, “transforming themselves into angels of light.” But there you may be miserably disappointed of that real righteousness, whereof they would be thought the sole possessors: for it is not mens much talking of it that presently entitles them to it: but it may be proper to enquire how they came by it, before we think ourselves obliged to acknowledge them endowed with it! for how can “the corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?” and trees of righteousness do not use to grow in nature’s garden. No; they must be transplanted, and altered by grace, before they can bear any thing pleasing to God. O what then shall we think of their righteousness and goodness, that make even as light as nothing of that transplantation and change made by conversion, and carry, as if they had been such as they ought to be, even all along from the beginning, and stand caressing themselves, and applauding the good that they still have done? so that, to talk to them of conversion, is an impertinent loss of your labour; for they seem to understand no conversion at all, but of Heathens, Infidels, or some very notorious sinners: when as, in truth, conversion is not only changing names and professions, but hearts and conversations. It is to be regenerate and made new creatures; to
pass

pals from death to life ; and not only civilized as to the external carriage, but renewed in the very spirit of our mind, and saved from our worldly loves, and carnal minds, as well as from crying sins, and scandalous ways. And such a change, O how many that name the name of Christ, yet stand in as much need of as any that lie without the borders of Christendom.

But when I hear men, that are for short cuts to heaven, and for widening the way, which our Saviour calls narrow, crying, it is but so and so, and seem as confident, as if all were their own already, though still their praying is at as low an ebb as their believing, and world and flesh seem to have them as much under, as any other men ; and to the means of grace, that should help us God and heavenward (as scriptures, and sermons, and sacraments, and sabbaths, and the daily exercises of piety and devotion) they seem very cold and indifferent, and are readier to dispute them away, than to shew any zeal for them. I am ready to think with myself, if the religion of these men would serve the turn, as low as it is with me, I durst venture, with ease, to fetch out such a copy. And yet though I wrote fairer, and reached further than so, I should be afraid to trust my everlasting salvation upon it. Nay, I should suspect all my faith in Christ, by which I hope to be justified and saved, if it did not excite and enable me to do better than some that think they have done enough, and are good enough, when yet they lie far short of those believers in Jesus, against whom they have so many articles, for their loose opinions, destructive of all good conversation.

Alas, who use to throw the righteousness further from them with their hands, than some that stiffliest plead for it with their tongues ! shewing much more concern for others holiness than for their own. And we should be very sorrowfully taught, if we had no bet-

ter patterns to learn it from; when even the inherent righteousness, upon which they hang all the weight of their salvation, yet such an ordinary attainment do they make of it, that a Heathen man, or an unregenerate sinner, might undertake to reach and accomplish as good a righteousness: for regeneration they treat as a child of the imagination; and only for the sport that it gives them, they might pass it over in deep silence. Belike they may not think themselves concerned in our Lord's determination, Matth. xviii. 3. "Except ye be converted, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Yea, for (that which is their pride) the very morality, yet I know the case, wherein they can make it a dispensable quality: for I have heard some of them fetch off an egregious swearer, drunkard, or scandalous liver, for a very good, honest man, of whose happiness they seemed not to make any doubt, because they were persuaded he meant no hurt, but only had such failings. And, at that rate, as loose as they count our doctrine of faith in Christ, we may say of their self-righteousness, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way; who almost can miss it?" They are indeed the quickest operators to relieve a troubled conscience. And if what they lay down would but serve the turn, it were the easiest matter in the world to do that which Elihu, Job xxxiii. 23. took for the work of an "interpreter, "one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness;" to point out that which will be a convincing evidence of one's title to the kingdom of heaven.

But, however, the righteousness of faith may be charged as destructive of good life (and let others take their liberty to judge as they find;) as far as my own experience reaches, I must needs testify,
that

that I know no such holy, humble, charitable, heavenly liver, as some of these censured believers. And many that live and lean by faith on the SON of GOD, have much more of the goodness to shew in their conversations, than others that would ingross it all to themselves in their disputations. Nor can I so admire any, even the best of the Socinians, as to think they do exceed, or come near to equal our holy reformers, who yet were the known maintainers of this doctrine of faith, and even built the reformation upon it; and, as they lived great examples to honour it, so they died faithful martyrs to assert it. And they that cry, it is no thanks to the doctrine, if some mens conversation under it be as becomes the gospel, talk like those that do not "know the truth as it is in Jesus," nor what an operative principle is the faith of Christ to produce all the fruits of a godly life: for, if indeed I do believe in him, as dying for my sins, and making my "peace through the blood of his cross," how can I but love him; yea, love him the more, the more I believe he has done on my account? and I cannot love him, but I shall set myself to please him; and then, sure, am I like to do him more ingenuous and acceptable service, than when I work only as a slave for dread, or as a hireling for wages.

I know the Papists also traduce ours for a loose religion, because we teach this justification by faith only: and yet, how often have we seen the loose liver, among us, run over to them for ease, and such hopes in an ill way as we could not give them? If faith in Christ be any part of our goodness (as I cannot but think it is, because God has commanded it, and promised everlasting life to it) it is not enough then to bring the whole pretension of their goodness under suspicion, who make so bold to explode and ridicule this faith, as a thing of more mischief than benefit to the world? And they that use
to

to be so saucy with gospel-mysteries, do not afford faith any more civil usage, but that which St. Paul calls the mystery of faith, 1 Tim. iii. 9, it is doubt, is still such a mystery to them, that when they make it their bauble to play with, and their eye-sore to rail at, they jeer and they strike at they know not what. But, if the well-living, greatly depends upon the sound believing, the *credenda*, then I think, ought to have a fair treatment, as well as the *agenda*. And, if some did believe of our LORD JESUS as they should, they would shew a little better manners, and more reverence to him, than they do. And, as he commended the centurion, Matth. viii. 10. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," I wish I could not say it, to the reproach of some, that would thrust themselves for shelter under our Israel, I have not found so great infidelity, no not in Rome; where an honourable author (in his acute way) has long since told them, they make a jest of Christ's three offices; yet they have not gone about to plunder him of his eternal Deity, and his infinite satisfaction, on which depends all our justification here, and our salvation for ever.

But they that can allow and plead for the worshipping of our Saviour, and yet tell us, we need not concern ourselves, whether he be God or not, would thus run us upon the same absurdity, as he condemned in the Samaritans, John iv. 22. "to worship we know not what;" yea, to give the glory of God (for ought we know) to a creature. And then we are like to be good livers, when, such foul idolaters. But (after all the ostentation) I should not doubt to find as good life and morals, yea, as good righteousness and religion, as theirs, even among the old Ethnic philosophers. Nor do I question but St. Paul, who was as great a scholar, was also as good a liver as Socinus; yea, how incomparably better? and yet he believed, that "Jesus Christ was over all, God blessed
" for

“for ever,” Rom ix. 5. and that we are “justified by faith in him, without the works of the law;” yea, by faith, in contradistinction from works, Rom. xi. 6. “If it be by grace,” (says he,) “then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. And of this faith and doctrine, it is most evident, he was a most zealous promoter. They therefore that asperse it, as tending to ill life, and dissolution of manners, must needs reflect on him, as a very shallow preacher, or none of the best livers.

But sure it can be no part of their goodness to justify themselves, and pride it in their own righteousness, and remain too sturdy, ever to “submit to the righteousness of God,” and wriggle themselves out of that meekness of faith, which his word makes their duty, as much as the holiness of life. But be it his word, never so plain; yet if they say it is not, but only our interpretation, that shall be their warrant to reject it all, and cry, it is against reason, and against good life; and therefore they are wiser and better than to hear talk of it. When I thought, it had been good reason to “submit to God’s righteousness,” though it might seem a disparagement to our own, and not set our weak reason to brist up itself above his revealed pleasure. And I thought good life had been in no danger, by accounting his righteousness better, and fitter to be confided in, than our own. But some would make us think they are of opinion, that the talk of a good life is all, when we can see as little of it among them, as with other men. And most of their zeal (as far as they commonly make it appear) is shewed, to fright men out of their faith, and “submission to the righteousness of God,” and to inveigh and rally against the believing in Jesus, though it be to the saving of the soul. But the Lord fortifies his faithful people
again&

against all such, Isa. li. 7, 8. "Hearken to me," (and not to them,) "ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: tear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." And, chap. liv. 17. "The righteousness of my servants is of me, saith the Lord:" and if it be of God, it shall surely stand, whoever go about to disannul it; and if it be according to his word, for certain it is holy, and tends to his glory, whoever spit their venom to blaspheme it. They take the wrong way to advance their opinion, or their reputation, with the believers on Jesus, when they are for stifling faith in Christ, to make mention of their own righteousness, even their own only.

But while others run down faith, to exalt good life, we would not (for reprisals) throw down good life to set up faith. Therefore,

2. Let none count a righteousness of their own needless to be possessed of, though they have still need of another to trust to. You must throw by your righteousness, as no foundation for you to build upon; but never must you throw it away, as the garment which you are to be continually clothed withal. Though your title to heaven must not be laid all upon it, yet there is no good hoping for heaven without it; no, nor any living upon earth; but you will lose yourselves, and expose the faith of Christ, by your means, to be evil spoken of. And "dead flies in the precious ointment," will give it an ill savour, and just offence, to open the blasphemers mouths. Here then must you be exceeding full of care; to walk circumspectly, as well as to believe assuredly; and to lead a life becoming your faith; that you may not only have the "witness in yourselves,"

“ yourselves,” but may have others also abroad, to corroborate the testimony, when they see the fruits spring out of the root in you ; and, from your light shining before men, must be constrained to confess you are illuminated with the beams of “ the Sun of “ righteousness.”

I confess, it is vain to talk of driving some men out of their own righteousness, that which indeed they never had ; but such must rather be taught, that “ except they repent, they shall perish ;” and that they must turn or die, as well as believe and live : for faith is the flight of a convinced sinner to the holy all-sufficient Saviour ; not only to be justified and preserved from damnation, but also to be sanctified, and made “ meet for the inheritance of “ God’s saints” in the heavenly glory. And I must tell you, that your own righteousness and holiness is as necessary, as your salvation and everlasting blessedness ; for “ the unrighteous shall not inherit the “ kingdom of God,” 1 Cor. vi. 9. And “ without “ holiness, no seeing the Lord,” Heb. xii. 14. Conversion, and becoming new creatures, and walking after the Spirit, and having the conversation in heaven, these are all such indispensable qualifications, that a man must have a faith against all the word of God, who can make account to get to heaven without them.

And I shall little regard the peace of mind that any do arrive at, in an idle, prayerless, or licentious way of life : for thus men may snatch the stolen goods, which one day they shall answer and smart for, and find all the fine security turned into the shadow of death ; and, by grace or hell, be awakened into lamentation, and weeping, and wo. They may so bribe or baffle conscience for a while, even when the “ wrath of God abides upon them.” But though they cry peace, and all well, when they know not, or mind not, what is amiss, he will bring them to
another

another reckoning, and not hold them guiltless, that can so easily absolve themselves: and if there be not grace and holiness, there will be no peace and happiness. Though upon the right believing depends so much our holy living here, and our eternal life hereafter; yet, as we must secure our salvation in the hands of our Saviour, so must we justify and adorn our profession in the sight of every observer. However true piety, as well as faith, leans upon Christ alone, (for he is made unto us sanctification, as well as redemption;) yet, wherever his gospel in power is received by faith, it will produce the fruits of a godly life. So that they are no true believers, but false hypocrites, who are wicked livers; nor are they found in the faith, that abound not in its holy fruits: for Christians are not to be distinguished from heathens, only by their orthodox opinion, but also by their exemplary conversation, else will they be found in worse case at last, even than those that were without Christ.

To contend for his faith is a duty. True, but it is not all: nay, to cry it up in words, and dash it down in the life; to flatter his person, and trample his commands, is not to believe in him, but to rebel against him. Believers "are created in Christ Jesus to good works," Eph. ii. 10, and "the mystery of faith is to be held in a pure conscience," 1 Tim. iii. 9. But faith is spurious, and none of that justifying faith we contend for, if it be not a holy faith, and such a principle of holiness as purifies the heart, and works by love, and is fruitful in good works. To Christ indeed, and to him alone, belongs all the honour of our salvation: but then we must keep up the glory of his grace, without overthrowing the authority of his government: and where we cannot work to deserve heaven, (that we need not do, when he has done it for us) yet must we use the means, and take the way he has appointed,

ed, to that salvation, which he has merited. Nor will he that works all our works in us, perform our duties for us; nor will God forgive and save us, without the terms on our part fulfilled: however, by his grace it is, that we do perform them; and to him we must seek still to enable us for the performance. And as we must borrow from another the righteousness which excludes all confidence of boasting; so we must have in ourselves the righteousness which excludes all boldness in sinning.

This then may confound the presumption of such as think it enough to hang all upon the righteousness of Christ, though they cast behind their backs all the precepts of Christ. And so indeed they would establish not their righteousness but their wickedness, and make their faith in the Saviour of the world, their patent to affront the holy One of God; whereas Christ's righteousness is no asylum for such bold traitors; but it is a sweet resort for all frail offenders. It is not for those that will not set themselves to walk in his holy ways; but for such as do what they can, yet still find they come short, and offend in many things. The penitent believers, whose desire, and care, and endeavour, is to "live godly in Christ Jesus," though still they are so faulty, they criminate and condemn themselves; yet he will answer for them, and bring them off: but the obstinate sinners, who put themselves under the banner of another commander, and set their hearts upon the world, and their lusts, and make no conscience of the holy duties which the gospel gives them in charge; though they be never so confident, that Christ shall save them, he will shake them off, and never own them, but pass the sentence of condemnation upon them.

Repentance, then, and righteousness, and holiness, and all virtuous and godly qualifications, are so absolutely needful, that there is no good to be done;

no heaven to be had, without them. No; it is vain, it is impudent, to look for a blessed end in a wicked way; when as the Saviour himself will not save us in our sins, but from them, i. e. not when we continue impenitently in them, not unless we contrive and strive to forsake them. "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of the wicked things forbidden, comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience," Eph. v. 6. He has revealed it from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, that hold the truth in unrighteousness," Rom. i. 18. And he that is angry with the wicked every day," will never allow of wickedness in any man. No; "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance does behold the upright," Psal. xi. 7. And "he that does righteousness, is righteous, and is of God," 1 John iii. 7, 10. It is not talking of it, or pretending to it, without doing it, that will prove you to be possessed with it, and owned of the Lord. And if you are not sincerely righteous, with a righteousness inherent, you will never be able to make it out, either to the world, or to your own consciences, that you are completely righteous with a righteousness imputed; for from this righteousness evermore flows the other.

But it may be asked, what need is there of this righteousness of our own, if we be justified by the righteousness of another? Nay, if God justifies the ungodly, may not we even cast away the care of piety, and live at large, how we please, if we do but believe in Jesus Christ, and persuade ourselves, that his righteousness shall set us right with God, and bring us safe to heaven; And then is not this a doctrine like to make good work to reform the world, and turn sinners apace to the Lord? How could you fit the humour of ungodly men better? and do not you thus give even the vilest wretches the halloo, not
only

only to run on, but to abound in all iniquity, that they may reap the abundance of grace, and make all even, by the cheap and easy way of faith; to believe that all their work is done, and they may then take their ease, and fear nothing?

I bewail it, that this is the common use many do make of all the rich grace of the gospel. Thus they stumble at the corner-stone, and dash themselves, to their own destruction, against the very rock upon which is to be built all our salvation. Thus the holy One of God shall be made the pander of sin, and reliance on Christ, the warrant to rebel against the Lord.

Now, both to stop the mouths of such as blaspheme the righteousness of faith, and are ready to cry out even of the chosen vessel for running loose with unfavoury doctrine; and also to stop the way against the beasts of the people, that are ranging about, to seek any gap where they may break loose, to out-run their duty; I must here give my pen liberty to flow down in a measure beyond the proportion observed in the other parts of this discourse.

And this cavillation having more in it of sophistry than honesty, and using to arise rather from that perverfement of spirit which holds the truth in unrighteousness, than from the real want of understanding, how to make a better use of it; and growing not so much upon a weak, as a wilful mistake of the design of our Saviour's coming, and of the nature of that true faith which gives us the saving interest in him; I shall think I have done enough to rescue the truth out of ill hands, and to satisfy all just exceptions, in capitulating with the objectors, and endeavouring to set them right as to those two points, and to cut off the occasions of wrestling and perverting them to their own vile and vicious purposes.

1. Though

1. Though I dare not limit the design of our blessed Saviour's coming into the world only to his preaching righteousness, and living and dying an example of all virtue and piety, in his continual doing good, and patient bearing evil, and leaving the rules of holiness for us to follow; however holiness has been well proved to be the design of Christianity, in a noted book (which also speaks the pious design of the right reverend author;) yet it seems with good advice, that ONLY was pinched out of the title of that book in the latter edition: for wo to poor guilty lost sinners, if Christ Jesus had no further end to atone for their guilt, and deliver them from the deserved curse, to give himself for their ransom, to make their peace with heaven, and to purchase them an eternal blessed inheritance there. This wonderful kindness and love of God our Saviour, must never be overlooked and forgotten; yet, at the same time, must we remember, that he had a design upon us, to renew us, as well as to redeem us; yea, to redeem us from the slavery of sin, as well as from the misery of hell; to turn us from our iniquities, and raise us above this world, and so to fit us for a better, after he had set us right in the court of heaven, to make us also meet for the kingdom of glory. Indeed his design (as one ingeniously says) was not upon our names, so much as upon our natures; not to raise a generation that should be called Christians or believers, but to make them such manner of persons, in all holy conversation and godliness, as should be to the praise of his grace, and "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" to cure the deadly diseases of our souls, that pulled us down to the ground, and made us ready to drop into hell; yea, to restore us to health and integrity, and "renew us after the image of him that created us," that we might be capable of communion with him here, and the blessed fruition of him for ever.

But

But, O how do they mistake the Redeemer, who take him for their servant, only to carry them to heaven, but no Lord to order them in the way leading thither ! yea, their slave to serve with their sins, and give them boldness to go on in their trespasses, because he has brought sufficient remedies ; and more despitefully to use them, the more he has done for them ; as if there were no more in his salvation, but just to save them from hell, without any further ado, whether ever they be changed and renewed by his Spirit or no ; and Christ must take them with all their treasons and rebellions, and save them, whether they will or no, though they run on quite wide of, and contrary to his way of salvation. So ill have they learned Christ, who think no better of him than as a protector of wickedness, giving men leave to live as they list ; yea, giving any the uncleanest sinners hopes of salvation, that will but talk of their good faith : when, as he was “ manifested to destroy the works of the devil,” 1 John iii. 8. and “ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us a peculiar people to himself,” Tit. ii. 14. He died for sin, that we being “ dead to it, might live unto righteousness,” 1 Pet. ii. 24. and to make us such a sanctified sort, that he might not be ashamed to call us brethren, Heb. ii. 11. yea, to make us so “ pure in heart, that “ we might see God,” Matth. v. 8. to turn our hearts against the corruptions which they were set upon ; and to make that holiness, which was our greatest eye-sore, become the most amiable beauty in our eyes ; to save us from the curse, but not from the obedience of the law ; to throw down our idols, that he might be chief and uppermost in our souls, and reign over us, till we should be fit to reign with him.

Though

Though he came to ease us of the load of our sins, yet not to discharge us from all the care of our duty; not to call us to a lawless condition, but to take his yoke upon us, and submit to his government and discipline over us, and resign up the right even of ourselves to our Lord Redeemer; to be, and to do, as he by his Word shall order us; yea, and order even the secretest workings of our hearts, not leaving so much as our thoughts free; and bringing all desires, intentions, and motions, subject to his controul; so making the heart-adultery, and mental malice, and pride of spirit, to be as much sins, even as any that break forth into outward act.

Indeed he gives not only hopes, but assurance to all believers, who repent and are converted, that their "sins shall be blotted out," Acts iii. 19. But then whatever we believe, he tells us, that "except we repent, we shall perish," Luke xiii. 3. The Saviour himself will not save us without repentance; and, "except he wash us, we have no part in him," John xiii. 8. We shall not be justified by his blood, nor glorified in his kingdom, if we be not also regenerated by his Spirit, and sanctified by his grace. "He is the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him," Heb. v. 9. Ay, but instead of saving, he will "destroy those his enemies, that would not he should reign over them," Luke xix. 27. He is the Physician to heal all our diseases: it is true, but not if we slight all his prescriptions. Our "being in Christ Jesus," frees us from condemnation. So we are assured, Rom. viii. 1. But then that inbeing must be proved by our holy walking, "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" for he will not save us in the way of our lusts, and in the way of this world, but in the way that he went, and in the way of his Word. He has, indeed, provided a remedy even for the worst, but they must
come

come into the prescribed way, and they must take it in due time. There is a door of hope, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all that repent and believe; but shall they "escape by iniquity," that do as bad as the worst, and yet reckon to be saved with the best? They that are mad upon their lusts, and grown old in their sins, and scoff at holy persons and duties, that talk of nothing above the world, and fashions, and fooleries, that ramble about after drink and meat for their lusts, and scramble and tear for the world, and live, as it were, in spite of the gospel, do they think to make all whole, by telling of their part in Christ? even those that are not fit to live among honest men upon earth, such as shamefully fail in the very lowest rank of works; (and one might expect better usage from many of the Heathens, than from such Christians;) do they presume thus straight to grow up into a fitness for the eternal dwelling with the holy God and his saints in heaven? They that are so close fist'd, they will give even nothing to the poor, and carry as if if they were no stewards to dispense out what they possess, but perfect proprietors, to do with it what they list; they that have no government of themselves, to conquer their brutish lustings with temperance, nor their passionate resentments with patience; yea, that throw themselves upon the very mouth of temptations, and are ready to catch up all the baits of sin, even as fast as the tempter casts them before them; the unconverted, that yet lie dead in their sins; the un sanctified, that are still strangers and enemies to holiness, that no more desire to be saved, than the devils do, *i. e.* only from torments, and, at the highest, aim at nothing above pardon, and freedom from hell: are they in the right way to heaven? and do they stand fair for the salvation of Jesus Christ? O how silly, yea, and impudent is their claim to him? Though they "name
" his

“his name,” if they “depart not from iniquity,” what shall they have from him, but “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity?” How poorly shall they come off, who expect he must own them, for calling, “Lord, Lord,” when they never applied themselves to do his will? Matth. vii. 23. when he had only the name, but the world and lust had all the service. They are like to find him a Lord then by his judgments, though he could not find it by their carriage. He will be as dreadful as ever he was contemptible to them, and make the enemies his footstool, that would not be persuaded to make his gospel their rule. And according to works, will he pronounce the standing sentences of judgment at the last day, when every one shall “receive according to what he has done in the body,” 2 Cor. v. 10. and Matth. xxv. saith the Judge to some, “Ye did so and so;” therefore “Come, ye blessed;” and to others; Ye did contrary; therefore “Depart, ye cursed.” Though heaven’s blessedness (it is true) the most righteous have not deserved; yet so we are taught, how the persons must be qualified, for whom it is prepared. As indeed all the promises in the law, If ye do so and so, ye shall be blessed, do not shew those works to be the causes of the blessings, but the qualifications of God’s servants, for whom those blessings are designed. And therefore, as to the proportions, he distributes them how he pleases, and not just as might seem equal in our eyes; giving to them that came in at the eleventh hour, as much as to them that had laboured from the third, Matth. xx. 9. that he might let them know it to be not purely the reward of the work, but the free gift of his grace. And though none shall be saved for his works, yet shall the works be called over, and enquired after, rather than faith, in the judgment; and every one shall be tried according to them, because only their good works can shew

shew their real faith, and interest in the Saviour of the world : and works being more public than faith, to be seen by all (as the superstructure lies more open to beholders eyes than the foundation) the public sentence before the world will therefore be passed thereafter.

For in the visible church, even all pretend to faith ; but then it will be put to the trial, who, indeed, had it ? And then the two grand parties of godly and ungodly, that divide the world, the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent, such as live after the flesh, and such as live after the Spirit, shall find a doom as different as heaven and hell, though many of them now joined in the same articles of faith, and went, in the common tale, as all alike. Nay some, that are not such notorious sinners, as every eye sees, nor every tongue cries shame of their courses, yet will not find Christ their Jesus, nor the Saviour of the world a Saviour to them, if they be not holy and heavenly, as well as honest and orderly ; if they be not inwardly changed and purified, as well as outwardly fair and civilized.

Indeed all that are effectually redeemed by him, will give themselves to live holily to him. And of all he does require holiness, though not perfect to merit heaven, yet real, to prepare them for it. Nor will he save any, but whom he sanctifies. In good truth, our sanctification is a very part and beginning of his salvation. So that before we shall find our souls in heaven, we must feel the workings of that salvation in our souls upon earth. And before we are numbered with his saints above, here we must be adapted to their inheritance, and shew their holy properties, as ever we hope to enjoy their heavenly privileges. Though our righteousness is no supplement to fill up any thing wanting in Christ's sacrifice, yet it is the terms of our receiving its blessed benefit. And, though we need not obey to the end

that he did, yet are we bound to obey, as the creatures of God, and the redeemed of the Lord ; and must walk in the way of holy duty, to his heavenly glory ; yea, and strive for it, as ever we would enter, though that be no meritorious cause of our entrance.

No pretended affiance in Christ Jesus, then will avail, without the new creature. And why are we made new creatures, but that we should walk in newness of life ? So that every one is not straight to set up for a saint, who has but a good opinion of himself. For, O how many do make the good profession of religion, that, like the cypress-trees, are only fair, but fruitless ! and yet the Saviour himself has doomed " every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, to be hewed down, and cast into the fire." He never came to effect for us a justification separate from sanctification ; when they are indeed no more to be parted, than light and heat in the sun. But as " the gift of the free grace of God " is our justification," Rom. iii. 24. so " this is the " will of God, even our sanctification," 1 Theff. iv. 3. And he that makes us perfect through the comeliness that he puts upon us, Ezek. xvi. 14. in giving the Lord our righteousness for an endowment unto us, also puts his Spirit within us, " causing us to " walk in his statutes, that we may keep his judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Nor must we seek unto him, only to have the pain of our broken bones eased, but to have them right set, that we may use our legs, to walk in his ways. And justification is not so needful to reconcile us to God, but sanctification is as needful to bring us to enjoy him. The former puts out the burning inflammation that afflicts us, and the latter puts a stop to the spreading infection that would kill us.

The

The Redeemer, indeed, makes us a way to escape; but it is a holy way, not of such a latitude, as any the loosest sinners that are called Christians might enter. No; he came not to make it wider, but to make us holier; to strip us of the cumbersome lusts and passions, that would hinder our entrance at the gate of life. Thus then must we take Christ, if we would not mistake him, and go without the saving benefit by him. And as the true mother was against dividing the child, so the true Christians will be against dividing the Saviour, and take him for a teacher, ruler, and sanctifier, as well as a Redeemer; and to redeem them now from their vain and vicious conversation, as well as hereafter from God's wrath and everlasting damnation; yea, to purify, that he may glorify them, and bring them to live in this world so holily to him, that he may advance them in the next to live for ever blessedly with him.

Again,

2. Though we are saved through faith, yet it must be more than a faith in conceit that will help us to a heaven in earnest. It is not only to shift opinions, and to go over to the party of another persuasion, and there reckon upon ease and rest, (as at Rome, where bad men may be good sons of the church, and, by professing to believe as the church does, entertain a confidence to be saved, as sure as ever man was.) Such as hang all upon a bare empty faith, without the good and godly practice, do quite mistake the nature of that true faith, which gives us the saving interest in our Lord Jesus Christ. And I confess, that no mistakes in religion are more rife and pernicious, than those about faith; some throwing it so low, as to signify just nothing; and others stretching it so wide, as to swallow up all duty else. Though so few have the jewel, and our Lord questions, where it will be found at his coming,

ing, Luke xviii. 8. yet almost all lay claim to it, as if every breast were the cabinet to inclose it; even the worst men will boast of their good faith within, though they have nothing good without to shew for it. When they hear there will be no heaven without faith, they are loath to give up all their salvation, for want of that believing, which they count so easy a performance. And though they cannot endure the exercises of godliness, yet taking faith to be only the owning of God and Christ, and a confident persuasion that all will be well with them, thus they make it so light a matter, and boldly arrogate that to themselves, which they think is so secret, out of the world's view, that none is able to disprove them. Here then they step behind the curtain, and plead what is in their hearts, so making account to hide all their evil beyond discovery; when, alas! they do still betray themselves in that course of their life, which is the main trial of their faith: and this is more to be known by the works than by the words. Let any say, as long and as oft as they will, that they do believe, this is no proof at all: for "what does it profit, if a man say, that he has faith, "and has not works; can faith save him?" James ii. 14. Such a faith (which is indeed but the image and shadow of faith) cannot save him, any more than a gilded paper-target can defend him. Let him shew me his faith without his works, and that will put him very hard to it; for he may as soon shew me the sun without light, or the fire without heat. And if he do shew me a sun without light, I am sure it is but the picture of the sun; and if he do shew me a fire without heat, I am sure it is but a painted flame; and if he talk of faith in Christ, without doing the work of God, I am sure it is but talk. In this case, therefore, we are more to trust our eyes than our ears; rather to see how men live, than to hear what they say: for, let a man affirm over and

over, that it is an excellent good fruit-tree, and yet I see it all withered and dead, and never to bear any thing worth the touching; I cannot then contradict my own sense and experience, to give him credit. And so let a man take never so much pains to make me believe, that he is a believer, and plead me down still, that he has the good faith, when I can never see what it is good for, nor find that he favours of holiness, nor follows after it, but rather disgusts and rejects it, and opposes and scorns it; does he think thus to dangle and stun me, in vaunting of his strong faith in God, and his good belief in his Saviour? Against which phrases does he conclude none must reply, nor dare to question any such pretensions? Here I have not the faith to believe all such boasters of faith; nor am so to be clubbed into ever the better opinion of such, whose nakedness I can too easily see through all these fig-leaves. If this be their faith, only to keep up a good conceit of themselves, and a strong presumption, that Christ will save them; nay, if this be the mighty achievement of their faith, to get the mastery of conscience, and think to bore and rush into heaven in a way clean contrary to what the gospel of our Lord points out; such audacious hanging upon the Saviour of the world, to justify and bear them out, even in all the worst they can do, who can look upon it as the faith of our Lord? Yea, what better can it bear, than the proud swelling of an unhumbed heart, and the daring boldness of such wicked and worldly men, than whom there are not really greater infidels in the world? when they can venture upon all sin, because Christ has purchased pardon; and after they have trampled down their own conscience, together with his holy laws, put on the bold face, as if they had done nothing against him; when their believing gives the *superfedeas* to godly living, their confidence is the bar to their conversion, and their faith is the

passport.

passport to carry them through all the foulest ways, as if they needed not care what they did, nor how they lived; when they have but once pinned themselves upon Christ, by that which they call their faith, but is indeed only a rude invasion, and vile profanation of the holy thing; such kind of believers may perish in their sins, for all this trusting in the Saviour of sinners: and the Solifidian conceit will never do them any service, unless to aggravate their guilt and punishment, for so affronting the Lord that bought them, and perverting all the grace of God which brings salvation. This very faith shall be laid to their charge as their sin, and such a sin which gave heart and strength to all their other sins; and, instead of leading and keeping them to the Lord, emboldened them to fly from him, and to set his commands at defiance.

Indeed their challenging a part in the Saviour, when they lash out so extremely wide of the way of salvation, does but betray them to be false usurpers of that glorious privilege, in which they have no part or lot. And they do so commonly confute themselves, as to save the faith of Christ from bearing the blame of their miscarriage. Unless they could give a likelier account how they came by it, and made a better use of it, the suspicion is strong against them, that there is no such thing in them.

When as tempests use to shake the soul, ere Christ says, "Peace, be still;" and when conviction and humiliation, preparing the soul for him, are such workings as all believers are well acquainted with, and from the greatest to the least, have a common sense of; what then, to their credit, can we think of their faith, who would be healed before wounded; at ease, before they have passed the strait gate; children of God, before they have felt any pangs of the new birth; the Lord's freemen, before they have been under the spirit of bondage; saved by Christ
Jesus,

Jesus, before they have found themselves lost without him?

Faith is compared to a building, Jude, ver. 20. And where we are to build high, we must lay the foundation low. But where there has been no deep humiliation, what is all the boasted faith, but a fond presumption? Such then are only full of themselves, and puffed up, like blisters or bladders, that were never pricked at heart, to let out the imposthume, and bring down the proud tumour. And it is then but a settling on their lees, instead of trusting in Christ; yea, and rather a strengthening themselves in their wickedness and worldly holds, than growing strong in the Lord: therefore they are so bold, because all flesh, and nothing of spirit in them to disturb them in their sins, but lurk in the rubbish of the old man, and fortify themselves in the natural fastness: and so they have need to look in the glass of the law, to see their sin and curse, before they look unto Jesus for relief and comfort. The repentance that breaks their hearts, and brings them to an unfeigned purpose of turning from their sins, must dispose them for the pardon, and the Saviour, which their faith is to receive.

And it is not to fancy forgiveness, and fancy happiness to ourselves, but to build on the sure promises of the gospel of our Lord: for true faith is bred and fed by the word of God. And hast thou then this faith, when the holy word that should revive, and cheer, and transport thee, doth nothing but confound, and gall, and strike thee dead? Is that the faith of Christ, and not rather a fiction of thy own head, that never purges nor raises thy soul, nor quickens thee to thy work, nor engages thy heart to the Lord?

A faith that is the back and bolster to bear thee up, even in the worst that thou dost, to give thee
heart's

heart's ease in thy sins, and make thee lie swallowing there, with a beastly pleasure.

Is it possible thou shouldst believe in the holy God, the holy Jesus, the holy Ghost, and yet be still a stranger and an enemy to holiness? Is it possible thou shouldst believe heaven to be the seat of holiness, into which nothing unclean shall enter, and yet love and chuse to continue filthy still? Thou art a sad believer, then, that believest nothing so much as the father of lies, and the absurdest dreams and contradictions.

Ah, Lord, how art thou provoked to thy face, by such as thou hast called to the knowledge of thy truth! when the Christian world so swarms with these locusts, buzzing every where, in our ears, with the noise of their faith, knowing that they are gone, as to any evidence for them from their life, yet they cry, they believe in Christ, and hope to be saved from their faith. And thus we have (if I may call over names so repugnant) swearing believers, and drunken believers, and whoring believers, and muck-worm believers, and knavish believers, and an endless gang of ungodly believers, who will all have it, that they believe; and still believe on till they have believed themselves out of their wits, and out of their souls; and believed themselves into the hands of the devil, and the damnation of hell. The Lord deliver us from such a senseless conceit, and wicked delusion, as the fine thing called their faith, which presumptuous sinners are so proud of.

But the right faith is a "most holy faith," Jude 20. And faith and holiness are so inseparably conjoined together, that whoever pretends to the one without the other, indeed has neither. And though faith does not make us free from all sin, yet it will give us such a tenderness, that we shall never be easy under it. It will make us impatient of the sinful uncleanness, and not suffer us to live and lie in the

the love and maintenance of any known wickedness. It is the "shield to quench the fiery darts of the wicked," so that we shall not usually fall by them; and whenever we do, we shall not lie by it, but be the forest burden to ourselves, till we have got it off; and go with a mighty concern, to keep and cleanse those very hearts, where we know the eye of God pierces: for so the heart is said to be "purified by faith," Acts xv. 19. It incorporates us with our Lord, as very parts of his body, endued with the same Holy Spirit that is in himself; and so obliges us to conform to our Head, with whom we are thus vitally one, that the members of Christ may not act as the limbs of Satan. And though our holiness (even at best) can never justify, yet the faith that justifies, will ever make us holy. Yea, though faith alone justifies us, yet not that faith which is to alone, as to be severed from all other virtues and graces. No; but if this root of the matter be in us, it will shew its prolific efficacy and fertility, in all agreeable fruits produced by us. As the sun in the heavens enlightens, warms, and enlivens things on the earth; such effects will the faith of Christ work in the soul. It is the refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, to purge out our dross and corruptions. It is the spring and weight to set all the moveable parts a-going; and will not let us rest from seeking the Lord, till in him we find rest to our souls. It is a principle of life; for "we live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. But a dead faith cannot give us life; and "faith without works is dead," James ii. 26. *i. e.* it is thus discerned to be dead; as the carcase, when there is no breath, sense, or motion in it, to shew any life.

So that I cannot give thee hopes to be justified by any faith, but what is justified by a holy life. And still works must be the certificate to thy conscience,

as well as to the world, that thy heart may not condemn thee, for pleading faith in Christ's merits, against obedience to Christ's commands: for there is a believing the Lord's commands, as well as his promises, Psal. cxix. 66. believing them to be not only needful and indispensable, but most equal and profitable; not only that thou must do them, but that it is absolutely best for thee so to do. And though thou hast nothing but Christ to trust to, yet thou hast a great deal more to do, besides trusting in Christ; a great deal more, which this trusting will put thee upon doing: for it is that principle of activity which will make thee busy, and shew the need that thou hast to be so; and also the blessed effects of it, that thy "labour shall not be in vain " in the Lord." Thus the lively faith will shew itself in the actions of life, in the sense of sin; hunger and thirst after righteousness, and after the favour of God; and such a zeal for his religion and service, as will make thee brisk and busy, warm and affectionate, about the offices of piety; and make thee groan under thy remaining dulness, as thy clog and grief.

For this faith is accompanied with a renewed nature; and then from that holy actions will flow, even as water from the fountain: so that thou wilt reverence and love thy Lord, and heartily devote thyself to serve his interests, and carefully consult his honour, and dutifully regard his pleasure, and delight to approach his presence, and to be busied about his work. For "unto them that believe, he " is so precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. that they slight and leave all for him: and therefore their faith is said to be their "victory over the world," 1 John v. 4. for they will not set their hearts upon it, when they know so much better wherewith to be entertained. Worldlings therefore are unbelievers; and they do but talk of faith in Christ, that are still all upon it
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for this world. For faith is the evidence of the unseen world, shewing such great and glorious things above, as to cloud and disgrace all that is here below. It is the ferment, working upwards; and, as wings, carrying the soul away to converse in heaven. And the believer cannot find his heart sink, and grovel, and settle here, but he is soon sensible of the folly and mischief, and cries and struggles to be delivered and raised from the dust of the earth, and the mud of this world. O what believers then are they, that never so much as make confession, or moan of their worldliness! but are rather in their element, when deepest so engaged, defend and plead for it, and shew an angry concern to be taken off, and no good-will to the holy exercises that have a tendency to the heavenly country.

And when faith and love of the saints are made twins, Col. i. 4. how can the believer be a persecutor? and what part is he of the body, that can tear and worry any member? No man can "hate his own flesh;" and no faithful soul can prey upon its own kind, nor be bitter against the generation of God's children. No; if thou love him that begat, thou wilt not malign any that are begotten of him; but to such thou wilt incline, and of such thou wilt be fond, above all persons else in the world. They will be dear to thee, for that holy image of thy Father, which is upon them.

And, in short, if thou art unholy, thou art unbelieving: for thou canst not believe the Word of Christ, but thou must be sure, that allowed sin will run thee upon the damnation of hell: and therefore, where thou canst not be innocent, yet thou wilt be penitent; and though thou canst not plead, *Not guilty*, yet thou wilt not be a worker of iniquity, but still aspire and strive to be more holy, as one that believes there is no other way to the heavenly glory.

Wouldest

Wouldst thou then give a good answer to such as ask thee "a reason of the faith and hope" that thou hast in thy Saviour? thou must give thy consent to be ruled, as well as saved, by him; and make appear how much indeed thou canst trust him, by venturing thy soul, and all thy eternal concerns, in the way that he bids thee take; never misdoubting the course he puts thee upon, nor fancying any other to be better, nor separating faith from holiness, lest thou separate thy soul from heaven, nor thinking to believe thyself into it, when thou dost not, by "patient continuance in well-doing," seek "for it;" for so mayest thou perish, in thy sins, for all thy reliance on thy Saviour, when it is on other terms than he has laid down; and thou seemest confident of thy salvation, in the very way of damnation.

But though thou must trust in him, so as to exclude every thing else for a Saviour, yet not so as to exclude thy diligence to work out thy salvation. And though thou must not set any inherent holiness in Christ's stead, to trust to it; yet must thou never throw it so low, as to vilify and grow careless of it, nor be a despiser of good works; however thou art not to depend upon them as the saviours of thy soul, thou must, notwithstanding, have them to shew for thy interest in the Saviour, to shew, that thou art "founded upon the rock," Matth. vii. 25. and that thou hast "laid up the good foundation against the time to come," 1 Tim. vi. 19. i. e. to shew, that thou art one of those to whom the promise of eternal life is made, one that by the grace of God art brought in the way to it, and standest fair and sure for it.

To sum up then what has been said: As the Son of God came not into the world, to make him friends with sin and wickedness, but to plant the faith that should be fruitful in works of righteousness

ness and holiness; so, wherever there is true holiness, it springs from faith; and if it be true faith, it will also bring forth holiness of life. And then for such as abandon themselves over to ungodly courses, no matter, indeed, whether they believe one way or another; for it is not any believing will be their security, who persist in wicked living.

It were well then, if our accusers were no more against the imputed, than we are against the inherent righteousness. O may we "put them to silence," in the Apostle's proposed way, 1 Pet. ii. 15. not by professing fairer, or talking faster, but by doing better. Though the Scripture is express, that "God justifies the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. (for that he justifies none but the godly, I never read in his Word;) yet our doctrine does not embolden any ungodly man so to continue. No; it is so far from defending him in his impiety, that it cuts off all his hopes, if he depart not from iniquity.

For "men, indeed, to justify the wicked," Isa. v. 23. is to patronize and hearten them on in their evil ways. But when God justifies the ungodly, a change always follows to righteousness and true holiness. And it must be sincere righteousness fulfilled by us, that will give us encouragement to plead Christ's perfect righteousness fulfilled in us. As by faith we must have recourse to him, and rely upon him, if we would have his righteousness to be our own; so must we follow him in the righteous ways he has tracked us out, if we would have the comfortable evidence, that we are righteous through his righteousness.

And if still the clamour go on, that we gratify the lazy, who are glad to slip the yoke, and throw off their duty; for, if all be done for them, why may not they sit still, and take their ease? and how can we press them to any good works, when we
teach,

teach, that they are all insufficient to their justification?

Let me ask such questioners, Is there no preaching up the necessity of good works, unless we prove them to be the sinner's plea for justification in the sight of God? And if they be any who belong to this church, will they not hear the church? (Serm. of Salv.) "We shut not out other good works, to be joined with faith; but we shut them out from the office of justifying: so that, though they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together."

And may not we disclaim their merit, and at the same time keep up their practice? Nay, what if, after all the cry, we better secure them, than they that build their justification upon them? For holding justification and sanctification to be inseparable, we do never renounce, but still suppose them, and still make them the consequents, though never the forerunners of faith and grace. Though we are not for exalting them above their due place, yet we would not shut them out of doors. Though we cannot pride it in the polluted stuff, yet we would not go naked. Though we dare not give them the honour of working our justification, yet we constantly affirm, that they flow from it, even as light from the sun: and though sometimes they are weak and clouded, as the sun-light is, and do not perpetually shine forth with a meridian lustre; yet there is the principle and fountain of them; and the seed of God, laid in the believing soul, to raise and maintain them; yea, even in a cloudy sky, we can tell, that the sun is risen; and it cannot be up, but there will be some signs of day: so no justification in God's sight, but there will be some holy change in our sight; as eyes opened, heart softened, prejudices conquered, affections raised, course turned, and the whole man bettered, not to be less careful of his duty,

duty, but more concerned than ever for it, seeing the grace of the gospel takes not away the obligation of the law, nor does justification give leave to commit any sin, though it give pardon for all sins committed. And it was a good saying of a great reformer, *Libertas in Christo nullam innocentiae fecit injuriam*. "Our liberty, in Christ, does not diminish any thing of our duty to him." For still "the tree is to be known by its fruits;" and they are not his sheep that do not follow him. The freedom, which he brings, is from the bondage of sin, and the dread of wrath, that we may more readily and ingenuously serve him, as a people delivered and made willing by him. And such a relaxation is the strongest obligation, Psal. cxxx. 4. "There is forgiveness with thee, O Lord, that thou mayest be feared;" even with such a childlike fear of offending, as is not only consistent with the dearest love, but naturally flows from it. And thus even believers "pass the time of their sojourning here "in fear," 1 Pet. i. 17. "looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God," Heb. xii. 15. And the more cautiously shall all, by such, be carried, the more they perceive how they have been favoured.

To be looked upon in our blood, and even when we were "enemies, to be reconciled unto God by "the death of his Son," Rom. v. 16. O what like the sense of this mighty undeserved love, to melt down and overcome the heart, and beget a dear love to him, that so first loved us! And then what so studious as love to be thankful? and to express the thankfulness in all pleasingness, striving and loving to be like our generous lover, and blessed provider? This is the ingenuity of God's children, to be won for ever with such kindness; and then take heart, because they are in such hand, and never think they can do enough for the God so unspeakably good.

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The sense of his love fills their hearts with joy; and then that "Joy of the Lord is their strength." Nothing in the world so animates and heartens them on in the way of their duty.

And though strangers to the life of love would sin for ever, if they durst for the fear of hell; and could ungodly wretches be but sure of pardon, alas! what would they do for the love of God, but be unfatiable, in the foulest wickedness, were all the barricadoes of a servile dread but removed out of their way? yet faithful souls fly from sin for the love of their dear Lord; and ask with a holy indignation, as Rom. vi. 1. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Shall believers make no conscience of obedience to God's commandments, because their obedience cannot justify them in God's sight? Or shall they grow upon the God of all grace, and venture to do their worst, because all is made sure on their side? The Apostle argues rather from their sure oblation to their more cautious conversation, Eph. iv. 30. "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption." And he "beseeches them only by the mercies of God," to devote themselves to his service, Rom. xii. 1. for indeed how could he ever devise a more forcible argument? Exhorting to a holy walking with God, he does not eat his former words, nor undo the doctrine he had taught of justification by "faith without works," as a loose and dangerous doctrine. No; he argues indeed from more sweet, but never the less cogent topics; such as, the dissingenuity, the ingratitude, the provocation, to sin against light and power, and all the most gracious engagements to do better; the painfulness and madness so to grate upon the soul, and wound the conscience, and create a hell in it. And they are novices in the business of regeneration, that do not know it produ-

tes the new creature : and what a contradiction it is then to his very constitution, to lie wallowing in sin, when he is shaped and made for quite another service ; how he reluctates against the wicked things ; and while he is himself, he cannot do it.

I appeal to every heart that has been warmed with the love of God, if there be in the world a more powerful dissuasive from sin, than the loving-kindness of the Lord in forgiving our sins ; if there be any cords stronger than those of love to bind us to our duty ; and if any force more prevalent than that, 2 Cor. v. 14. when “ the love of Christ constraineth us.” No ; the child of God would set himself against sin, though there were no heaven or hell ; for God makes it irksome, and holiness delightful, to the justified soul. He that lives in the region of love, and sees the love of Christ blotting out all the bitter things which the law writes against him, is more animated, as well as more obliged, to live to the reliever of his misery : and faith does more to conquer his corruptions, than all the most elaborate of legal duties ever could do : it wings and inspirits his services, to know in whom he believes, and with whom he has to do ; the sweet Saviour, the tender Father, that exacts not our failings, but compassionates our infirmities ; and expects not perfection of obedience from us, but approbation of that holy law, which we can no better fulfil, and an earnest desire and endeavour still to proceed further, and do better : and then he cheerfully enters the yoke of Christ, as that of wedlock, and draws in it, not as compelled to it, but in love with it.

Now, how uneasy soever it is to move for dread of the lash, yet what more delightful than to obey him, that so spares us, that has abounded with such riches of grace towards us, and that is still surprising us with loving-kindness afresh ? Though faith is a riddle to the natural man, and holiness but a correc-

tion-house to the un sanctified sinner, the believer is swayed with the power of the one, and ravished with the sweetness of the other. And he that has known the sorrow of his old distemper, will be proud of the cure which grace has wrought, and ever wary to preserve the health recovered. And if Gentiles, in the state of nature, much more the regenerate, in the state of grace, are "a law to themselves," their own new nature, and the divine image drawn upon them, is a standing rule to them. And they that have the internal relish of heavenly sweets, and the very life of God derived to them, will be infinitely choice and tender thereof, and shrink back, with the utmost antipathy, from all that assaults and spoils the portraiture of God, and the antepast of glory in the soul. And even when they are safe in the hands of their Saviour, yet they will tremble at the sins that drew his blood.

Thus the doctrine of free grace, and justification by faith, (that soft pillow under the weary disconsolate soul,) which, like other sweet and good things, is liable to such foul abuses, yet works in all regenerated persons to holy purposes. And the same grace that justifies them, also preserves them from that diabolical sophistry, to argue from divine mercy to carnal liberty. Thus saith our church, Art. 17. "The godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, as it is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, so does it fervently kindle their love towards God." And however forward some are to damn believers to hell, for the very persuasion and confidence, upon which, themselves do know, is built all their love of God, and living to him; I can never admire any of those fruits, that are not of the gospel-plantation, and that have not Christ "dwelling by faith in the heart," for the root that bears them.

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All that know "the grace of God in truth," cannot but know, what a holy thing it is, and how it operates in the soul to all the best effects; yea, what a satisfaction and pleasure it gives in well-doing, as the discovery of our unfeigned believing; and so makes the good works more refreshing to ourselves, than ever they can be to the bowels of any others, that fare the better for us. Nay, even godly sorrow, which works the repentance without which we shall perish, flows from this same fountain of faith. And there cannot be the true evangelical repentance, which the believing of God's goodness, and love in Christ Jesus, does not lead us to. So teaches our church, (Serm. of Rep.) "A part of repentance is
" faith, whereby we do apprehend and take hold on
" the promises of God, touching the free pardon
" and forgiveness of our sins; which promises are
" sealed up to us, with the death and blood-shed-
" ding of his Son Jesus Christ; and they that teach
" repentance without faith in Christ, and a persua-
" sion that God, for his sake, will forgive us all our
" sins, teach but the repentance of Cain and Judas."

Where is the wrong then done to holiness and good life by this doctrine of faith, but that it gives a better security to the believers piety and integrity, to preserve them from apostasy, and to "keep them
" by the power of God, through faith, to salva-
" tion?" and also that it makes all that is holy, just, and good in them, more voluntary and filial, and better becoming the Lord's freemen, and the dear children of our heavenly Father?

Therefore, though we would never take off from the necessity of personal righteousness, nor offer to relax the obligation to holy conversation; yet we would have a root to bear the fruits; for else we know there can be none, but painted or rotten fruits, which, however they may please a moral heathen, yet will they not please a holy God, who is
pleased

pleased only in his beloved Son, and pleased with none but such as are in him. We would not then have faith banished, lest all the good so much contended for, should go off with it: for what good fruits, without an implantation in Christ Jesus; if we will hearken to him, John xv. 4. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Can persons have lawful children before they are married? And what high thoughts can we conceive of their piety, who make but a jest of this spiritual matrimony, and such an union with the heavenly Bridegroom? Sure the works truly good, and a life right godly, are not such a bastard-brood, but a more legitimate offspring.

It is not to say, then, if I were completely holy, then I would make bold to believe, but thou must believe, that thou mayest get matters amended, and be made holier and better, and first be grafted into thy Saviour, that thou mayest bear the fruits, to glorify thy heavenly Father. And such as go another way to work, they are "ignorant of God's righteousness," and the "way of peace they have not known." Let holy life then be ever owned as the consequent of holy faith, and "let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." But let them know withal, that by his grace it is to be done; and acknowledge with our Apostle, Gal. ii. 10. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me:" for he is our life, and the eternal fountain of all holiness: so that "if any man be in him, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. otherwise he is but a vain pretender.

Thus I have shewed an absolute necessity of the righteousness inherent, that righteousness which is called our own. But yet, after all, there is no necessity

cessity of trusting in it, or building all our salvation upon it. Take heed of "going about so to establish it." But,

3. Submit to the righteousness of God, as ever you would enjoy peace with God.

This advice now is to such as labour in the works of righteousness, and give themselves daily to the practice of holy duties, and are "followers of God" as dear children," in the ways of a serious religion, both diligently "keeping their hearts," and conscientiously "ordering their conversation." The relief and comfort here to be administered, such as these do need, and to such it does belong. And "wo" to us, if we preach not the gospel," this truly gospel-message, and glad-tidings, to them; that Christ the Lord will espouse their cause, and give them rest, and take their faults upon himself, and make them "the righteousness of God in him." This is the very marrow of the gospel, which makes all the redeemed of the Lord heartily to bless God, for the redemption of the world by his Son Jesus Christ, and praise and magnify him for ever.

And notwithstanding this faith in Christ, and his righteousness imputed, has been fiercely assaulted by all the forces that Satan and his instruments, the sons of pride, could muster up against it, and never (it may be) with more bitterness than of late: yet, if we are wise for our souls, we will sooner part with our lives, and all that is dearest to us in the world, than ever let it go; when as all the world cannot save them that receive not only the Saviour of the world, offered to them: and how is he received, but by faith? John i. 12. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." We are "made the righteousness of God in him," even as he was "made sin for us," 2 Cor. v. 21. And how was that but by imputation? "What the

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law could not do, in that it was "weak through the flesh," (or unable to justify us, through the obstacle on our side,) it is fulfilled in us, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, whereof we are to give testimony, by our walking, "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 3, 4. though it is not in our services, but in our Saviour, that we are complete; and we shall be sentenced by the sincerity of our hearts, and not by the perfection of our works, when found in him, who will answer for the imperfection of all his.

But, after all the bragging of works, alas! what are all the best works good for before justification? if our church shall be heard, Art. 13. "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not acceptable and pleasant to God; for as much as they spring not from faith in Christ, but have even the nature of sin" O! how can dead men do the works of the living? and who expects to "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" It is after faith, that men are in more care, and in better capacity, to live godly. Christ's faithful people are made a willing people, by his law written in their hearts. And to mollify the heart of stone; to make the slave of Satan a member of Christ; to turn dunghills into beds of spices; heaps of rubbish into temples of the Holy Ghost; wolves into sheep; and persecutors into preachers of the faith: all this is the mighty work of God, in the renovation of a sinner. And to the faithful it is "given of him, to believe in the name of his Son," Phil. i. 29. But before men can go, they must have life and legs. And till quickened together with Christ, and "created in him to good works," it is but blowing at a dead coal, and a vain struggle, to think of doing all ourselves, when, alas! "without him we can do nothing." Even the godliest men are so humbled and broken in the sense of their defects, that, upon this account, they are the greatest
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burden to themselves ; yea, so lothe themselves for their sins, that they are for getting as far as they can out of themselves, and for setting up under the shadow of the Lord their righteousness, where they shall be no more bold than welcome ; for he that redeemed them, will kindly receive them. He bids them come to him, and promises, that so coming, he " will not cast them from him," Matth. xi. 28. and John vi. 37. And this now is the " way of peace," the only way of true peace, Rom. v. 1. " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here is the childrens meat, belonging to all the household of faith. And such must not be hindered of their portion in due season, because the dogs will be snatching at it. The flower is not therefore to be grubbed and suppressed for shewing its head, because some spiders may suck poison out of it. And must we bury some of the Word of God in silence, because ill men may wrest it to their ruin ? " Must their lies make men hold their peace ? " as Zophar asked, Job xi. 3. must we not " declare the whole counsel of God," if any part of it be in danger to be misunderstood ? No ; the sun, that tans, and blackens, and hardens some things, is needful to illuminate, warm, mollify, beautify, sweeten, meliorate, and perfect others. And such various effects has the opening of the " Sun of righteousness," according to the different condition of the recipients. But what some make mischievous to themselves, yet it cannot, without wrong and damage, be withheld from others : let those make never so bad use of it, these can never do well without it.

The free grace of God in Christ Jesus is the only ark for a tossed soul to rest in. But to seek rest in our own performances, is like a man's struggling in waves, to keep on the water-top, which by art or might, for a little while, peradventure, he may do ; but needs must he sink,
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when he has spent all his strength ; and cannot lie long on the surface, without a support, or some vessel to carry him away to the desired haven. To rely on him that has satisfied the law, which condemns us, and bore the curse, which else must have fallen upon us ; this may, indeed, relieve and ease us. But no rest for sinners any where out of Christ to be found, either in themselves, or in all the world. Only his merits and satisfaction, which content the justice of heaven for our sins, can pacify conscience, and settle our disquieted souls. And the soul that embarks not on this bottom, will still be fluctuating, and find nothing but sad frustration. Till we come to take up here, O where shall we find any place to lay our heads, or fix our feet ? To rifle our own garden, for the fruit that grows no where but in paradise ; to think of living out of Christ, on the stock of our own sufficiency ; to bring that to the Lord, which we should fetch from him ; to bear the burden, which we should cast upon him, and go forth in our own strength, when we should lean on the Lord “ our strength and our Redeemer : ” all these are baffling attempts, which will leave us to lie down in darkness and sorrow. When we know ourselves to be worthy of all hatred, O how can we ever be satisfied, till we believe ourselves “ accepted in the Beloved ? ” What else can drive from our conscience, the dread which drives us from our God ? When we go conscious, that he sees and lothes our filthiness, and no work we can do, but is stained with the corruption in us ; or, do we never so well at present, yet the remembrance of former sins recoiling upon us, will spoil, not only all the merit of it, but all the hope built upon it. Here, to cover our nakedness with fig-leaves, rather betrays our folly, than hides our shame. For the rags of depraved nature, however fringed and coloured with all artificial accomplishments, and moral performances,

ances, they can never give boldness and assurance to any that know themselves, till they are found in Christ Jesus, the true King of righteousness, and King of peace, the great plenipotentiary of heaven, sent not only to treat with us, but, by his merits, to effect the blessed peace for us.

O which of all the moralists can direct a conscious sinner to peace with the just and holy God! who can cry to him, "Abba, Father," till they have some sense of their adoption in the Son of his love? Still we shall be diffident of audience and acceptance, if we go in any other name or recommendation: we shall go to him, then, not as children to their father, but as malefactors to their judge and avenger. And nothing but our trust in the mercies of our God, through the merits of our Saviour, can send us (as the heirs of glory) with "boldness" to the throne of grace." Without this, no awakened conscience was ever well settled, no faithful soul built up and established. If we gather our future bliss only from our present works, no wonder that our hope is still ready to give up the ghost. So little of heaven is to be seen in such muddy waters. And if none but the worthy should be saved, ah, Lord! who then should be saved?

Though "love is the fulfilling of the law;" true, yet, when that law obliges us to "love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and mind, and soul, and might," and we cannot but be conscious how defective and short herein we have been, and still are; it will rather terrify than justify us, and give us more smart than comfort; and, instead of building us up in the faith, it will demolish and batter down our hopes. For, O what comfortable expectation can we build upon that holy, perfect law of God, which only discovers our nakedness, and upbraids our imperfection, when we carry in us still so much matter of our own indictment and condemnation!

And, "who can say, I have made my heart clean? "I am pure from my sin?" Prov. xx. 9. even the saying it would but add to the sin. Yea, when the very fairest of our works, that look most likely to justify us, yet need to be pardoned themselves; and nothing that we can do, but still tells us, how much we want the Saviour to help us out. When we hear then the promises of God to reward good works, O what works of ours can we ever think worthy of reward, if his own mercy in Christ do not first cover that in them, which makes them worthy of punishment?

The consciousness of our integrity (we know) is called the brazen wall, to set us safe, and to make us undaunted: and, indeed, great is the security and the confidence, arising from sincerity and uprightness, as it is an indication and seal of our faith unfeigned, and of our real interest in the holy Saviour. But will it not argue rather a forehead, than a wall of brass, to think of immuring and fortifying ourselves so in our own righteousness and goodness, that the Redeemer shall seem of small use or significance to us, and the dependence on his merits, fit only for some else, that are not so well provided?

In good truth, even the best of men have the poorest thoughts of their own performances, and the least expectation from them. The greater progress they make, the more defects still they spy, and come to know themselves better, than to trust in any the best of their own doings: as was well observed by Cardinal Cantarenus; though an adversary, yet his testimony has not the less, but the more validity, as coming from one of the company of merit-mongers. *Experimento videmus* (saith he) *viros sanctos, qui quanto magis sanctitate proficiunt, &c.* "We see, by experience, that holy men, the more sanctified they grow, and the further they pro-
ceed

“ceed in holy ways, they have still the meaner opinion of themselves, and find the more need of a Saviour, and of his righteousness imputed; and so give up themselves to rely on Christ alone. Now, this is not, because growing holier, they see less than they did before, or become more vile and abject than they were; for the more holily they are, the more quick-sighted also, and the more noble spirited: but, as they grow more searching, the more do they apprehend the slenderness of their own inherent righteousness, and discern more spots to offend their enlightened eyes, and find that there is no leaning to their own virtue and goodness, but that they must of necessity betake themselves unto Christ Jesus, and rest upon his grace and merits imputed to them.”

Thus the purest in heart use to be the poorest in spirit. And, as the spirit of the humble, and of the contrite ones, most needs to be revived, so the blood of Christ eases the oppressed mind, when nothing else in the world can. Faith sends us to our Lord Jesus; and the belief of his Deity and all-sufficiency gives us the surest hope, and the sweetest consolation. For, no doubt then, of a full atonement and propitiation made for our sins, when he was no less than God that made it.

To think of God's holiness, and our own sinfulness, that is enough to strike down even the exactest liver, if he have nothing without himself for his support. But the curse of the law, to believers on Jesus, is a hand-writing taken out of the way, a bond cancelled, and nailed to the cross of Christ: for what he did as a surety, Heb. vii. 22. to blot out the *chirographum*, that obligation which was against them, Col. ii. 14. that they are interpreted to have done themselves, as debtors, seeing debtor and surety

ty are, in the sense of the law, but one and the same person. And considering him as the Head, and ourselves as his members, it will not only appear more plain to our understanding, but come home more close to our consolation, that God dealt with him as a sinner, for our sins taken upon him, and deals with us as righteous, for his righteousness made over to us. And thus only do we come to be on even-board with heaven, and to "joy in God, through "our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. seeing he has so "loved us," as to "wash us from our sins, even in "his own blood," Rev. i. 5.

And this faith in Christ, and depending only upon his satisfaction for our salvation, some that scorn it as their meal by day, may yet be glad to come to it as their supper at night. The death-bed may bring them to Bellarmine's *Tutissimum est*.—"It is the safest "course to trust only to God's mercy," which must be through the blessed Mediator, because out of him, God does not extend saving mercy to any miserable sinner. Such another song at that time may they sing, than they were wont to be heard in. And the worst that I wish them is, that they "may find mercy from the Lord in that day;" even for his sake, whom now they seem to apprehend so little need of. But, at present, I cannot think they are in any good way for it. And, O how just were it with God, at last to bar up that refuge against them, out of which they now so studiously shut themselves, and then to despise their souls, as they now cast their contempt upon his Son, and strive to tear up the very foundation of all Christian hope and consolation, even that faith in the blessed Jesus, and that steadfast reliance on his merits and righteousness, which alone will give relief and comfortable expectation in our closest approximations to the holy God, in our surprisals with the most

most startling events, in the depth of our forest pressures, and in our most serious preparations for the dying hour, and the eternal world to come?

But blessed be the "God of hope, that fills us
"with joy and peace in believing;" Rom. xv. 13. that very believing which they make the subject of their mocking. And when every refuge else shall fail, and nothing besides, in ourselves or in all the world, will be found fit to place confidence in, this will be a retreat, whither the faithful may fly, and where they may be safe. Though men revile, and, like the unconverted soul, Acts xxii. 9. "beat those
"that believe on the name of Jesus;" though Satan accuse, and conscience recoil, and the law condemn; yet rooted and built up in Christ Jesus the Lord, Christian, thou shalt be "stablished in the faith, a-
"bounding therein with thanksgiving," Col. ii. 7. For though thou hast sinned, thy Redeemer has satisfied; and God has promised, that "whosoever
"believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins," Acts x. 43. Therefore, saith the Apostle, Gal. ii. 16. "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we
"might be justified by the faith of Christ." And when it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Rom. viii. 33, 34. If men do, no matter; for thou art not to stand or fall at their sentence. And if the Lord bless though they curse, it shall do thee no hurt, nor deprive thee in the least of his blessing: but, being forgiven, and justified, then thou art blessed, and mayest not only be at rest, and well satisfied, but having "access by faith into
"this grace wherein thou standest, mayest rejoice
"in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 2. And
"if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of
"God," John xi. 40. "In quietness and confidence then shall be thy strength," Isa. xxx. 15. This faith will make thee more "strong in the Lord,
"and bold in thy God," than all the forces thou
canst

canst ever raise from thy own works: for if thou build there, alas! it is but upon the sands and the floods, and still thou wilt be a stranger to peace and rest. After thou hast done all that ever thou canst, yet wilt thou find so much fault and imperfection in it, that, like many others, who do best, thou wilt be most unsatisfied with thy own doings: so that I cannot think the “quietness and assurance for ever,” Isa. xxxii. 17. is so much the effect of our own righteousness, as of the “righteousness of God:” “for we who have believed, do enter into rest,” Heb. iv. 3. And “after be believed in Christ, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise,” Eph. i. 13. But they that still insist on the justification by works, are never like to taste the sweetness of grace: for the rest and rejoicing comes of faith and believing: and this is the joy and solace of faith, that our Lord Jesus is the Son and heir of heaven, and that we in him are the children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: for upon what does all our salvation depend, but upon the promised mercy of God in Christ Jesus? and what receives and embraces the promise, but our faith? To love God, indeed, that fits us up to live with God. But O how can we love a judging, punishing God, that is against us, till we believe, that he is reconciled to us, and upon terms of peace with us? for we “love him, because he first loved us, and have known and believed the love that God has to us,” 1 John iv. 16.

And though some in their writings of faith, suppress and stifle (or only jeer and disgrace) the trusting part of faith, I wonder that any conscious sinners dare do so: and I much more wonder, that any ministers or members of the church of England should ever offer to do it, when the church makes this trusting so essential to faith, and even the whole description of it. (Hom. of the Pass.) faith is called
 “a sure

“ a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God,
“ whereby we persuade ourselves,” (not only that
Christ died, to put us in a capacity of pardon, which
is all that some will please to allow, but) “ that God
“ both hath, and will forgive our sins; that he hath
“ accepted us again to his favour, released us from
“ the bonds of damnation, and received us again
“ into the number of his elect people, not for our
“ merits or deserts, but only and solely for the me-
“ rits of Christ’s death and passion.”—And “ this
“ faith is the only instrument of salvation now left
“ unto us;—even stedfastly to behold Christ cruci-
“ fied with the eyes of our heart, and only trust to
“ be saved by his death and passion, and to have our
“ sins clean washed away through his most precious
“ blood.” (And first part of Serm. of faith:)
“ Faith is not only the common belief of the arti-
“ cles of our faith, but it is also a true trust and
“ confidence of the mercies of God, through our
“ Lord Jesus Christ, and a stedfast hope of all good
“ things to be received at God’s hands.” And in-
stead of cautioning us against such doctrine, the Ho-
mily of Salvat. reciting the words of St. Ambrose,
“ They who believe in Christ are saved without
“ works, and by faith only, freely receive remission
“ of their sins,” thus descants upon them: “ Con-
“ sider diligently these words, without works, by
“ faith only, we freely receive remission of our sins.”
What can be spoken more plainly, than to say,
“ that freely without works, by faith only, we re-
“ ceive remission of our sins?” (And then ends
thus:) “ Faith says to us, Unto Christ only I send
“ you, to take away your sins, forsaking therein all
“ your good virtues, words, thoughts, and works,
“ and only putting your trust in Christ.” (This is
very plain speaking; yet faith the next Hom.) “ All
“ will not serve with the contentious, but they will
“ forge matters of contention, when they have no
“ occasion

“occasion for it.” Which was a prediction, that some, in these days, are very officious to verify upon themselves.

But, when our articles of religion, do call this godly and wholesome doctrine; and some of our fathers, and sons of the church, now gird at it, and thunder against it, as pernicious, if not damnable doctrine, shall we hear the church, or these new doctors? If we must hear them, why then are not the articles and homilies publicly condemned? Nay, why are they still recommended to be read in churches, and made the very test of a son of this church; yea, imposed as the terms of coming into its ministry? How does this consist with what we so often hear from pulpits, and see from the press, such contrary notions, and confident assertions, concerning faith and justification, as if the authors of them were sworn enemies both to articles and homilies?

I know how coarsely the former have been treated by some of late, from whom one might have expected better words. Though they have chose to swallow what they find themselves unable to digest, yet they might forbear to reproach their church and their own act both together. But now it may be counted a favour only to expound the articles, when so many cannot forbear to expose them. Indeed the late exposition, that seems to be rather a history, than decision of the controversy, yet gives the beam a gentle turn, so much past *aequilibrium*, that one, who never had the honour of the great author's private conversation, may, notwithstanding, thereby attain to a pretty good understanding of his own opinion.

However the variety of senses, which he gives, is entertaining, the *acumen* and dexterity of management very taking, and the pacific healing design commendable and praise-worthy; (for, where we
cannot

cannot all think alike, there must be some bearing and forbearing one another:) but yet contradictions will never be reconciled, and doctrines derogating from God's free grace, and Christ's full merit (by such as have experienced the one, and confide in the other) cannot well be digested or endured.

We have long had a good honest exposition, that has done the articles justice, in shewing their fair agreement with the Holy Scriptures. And, indeed they do so far explain themselves, in their own evidence of expression, that every true believer (though no scholar) is ready to be a subscriber. And others, of the old leaven, cannot but see so much naked truth in them, as gives them a prejudice against them beyond any possibility of reconciliation, however any may seek to hide that truth, by wrapping it up in the clouds of a polemic dissertation. And when they seem to praise the moderation and wisdom to be observed in our present articles, and make a flourish, as if they had them on their side, or could expound them to their own cue; they might be much better pleased with a new set, or, at least, be very willing to abate half a dozen of the thirty-nine; those, in particular, that exalt the grace of God so high, and humble the pride of man lower than they have a mind to be thrown. Now, here, some that glory in their sonship, might do well to shew so much dutifulness to their mother, that many who dissent from the discipline, may not be known (not to say spighted) for being a great deal more orthodox in the doctrine of this church. But how uneasy soever any sons of the church are to be so tied up, I cannot think the time is come, when there should be a necessity of coining a new sense of the old articles, or that any alteration of our affairs should call for a change in the doctrine of our church, *i. e.* (as I have all along understood it) the doctrine of the gospel. I do sin-

cerely join in the church's prayer (on St. Paul's conversion) that "God, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle, St. Paul, has caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world, would grant, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness to him for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught."

But if they quarrel with some obsolete words, or immodish expressions in homilies, must the doctrine also suffer for those? They may be amended (*si placeat*;) but I wish that the teachers of a novel faith would let the doctrine alone, lest it fare never the better for such daring innovators, who (in my opinion) should rather have kept out of the church, than come into it, to make so bold with their own subscriptions, as well as her determinations, when they can set up the loud outcries of no less than ruin to the church, from such as they think are not exact enough in the lesser matters, which the author of EIK. BAZ. (to the Pr.) calls "the skirts and suburbs of religion;" and yet themselves never stick so desperately to strike at the very substance and vitals.

But whatever a great man says against faith's "justifying only as it apprehends the merits and "righteousness of Jesus Christ," I dare admit this principle, even in the engagement with an Antinomian champion, depending on a good cause, and the authority of a sound church, without presuming on my great luck, or the adversary's little cunning. The book, out of which I quote this, and some books of the like argument, wherewith I am well pleased in the main, I should admire as excellent throughout, if they had but another turn given them, as to the matters of faith taught by ours, and by all the reformed churches.

And

And whatever you may read in some books, or hear in some sermons, to the contrary, be so “root-
“ed, then, and established in the faith,” Eph. ii. 7. that no cavils or scoffs of the adversary may ever shake or shame you out of it. O “strive together
“for the faith of the gospel! in nothing terrified
“by your adversaries,” Phil. i. 27, 28. let them talk never so confidently or reproachfully; but learn resolution here of our Apostle, 2 Tim. i. 12. “I am
“not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed;
“and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that
“which I have committed unto him, against that
“day;” even myself, and the whole of my salvation, I have put into his blessed hands; and I doubt not of his sufficiency for my good security. I set my heart at rest, not because I have gone through such offices, or done such works, but because my Redeemer liveth, who is able to save me, and invites me to come to him, that I may be saved by him.

Thus, Christians, by the hand of faith, take and apply the LORD JESUS, with all his saving benefits to yourselves, to rely on him for salvation; and lay all the stress of your eternal bliss on him alone; so, as if he fail you, ye are for ever lost; and so to trust your whole salvation on the meritorious ransom of your Saviour, as to have no other shift or reserve in the world; to reckon upon no other way of help and relief, if this will not do; to despair of yourselves, and of all other creatures, for the obtaining everlasting salvation; and to put all that ever belongs to your final welfare into the sole custody of Christ Jesus; and to confide in the help that is laid upon him, the Almighty Redeemer, and in no other: this is to take and apply him to yourselves, and rely upon him alone, without any to go partakers with him, or any other refuge to turn in at, should he disappoint you; “looking for the
“mercy

"mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life," Jude 21.

And thus, poor, helpless creatures, must do, and not dream of a self-sufficiency, to be like the MOST HIGH, whose prerogative is to depend upon none out of himself, but be glad to seek further, and take sanctuary elsewhere; to stay upon the "HOLY ONE of Israel," and put themselves into the hands of JESUS CHRIST, that Almighty Helper, with whom alone they may be safe, and there set their hearts at rest: for our need and impotent state do throw us upon other security and resorts abroad, than what we find at home, in ourselves, fit to be relied on. And, if David said, he "had fainted, unless he had believed," we need not be ashamed of that propensity to our weakness; but may rather "rejoice in Christ Jesus," and bless "the God of our salvation," for that most comfortable retreat; and there solace ourselves, as Psal. cxvi. 7. "Return unto thy rest; O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

And this now, is no intoxicating opiate, to stupify conscience, but a divine recipe, most needful to settle the soul. It is building upon that Rock, Rom. ix. 33. "on whom whosoever believeth, shall not be ashamed." Though ungodly sinners, by their blind presumption, dash themselves against this rock, and so he proves also for the fall of many; yet true believers can never be established on any other foot. And therefore others profanation of the sanctuary must not drive them from it, when it is not possible for them to live, and be well, without it; for Christ is both "our life, and our peace," Col. iii. 4. and Eph. ii. 14. Without this quickening Spirit, we are "dead in our sins;" and, without his propitiating merit, we are dead in law, and condemned at the tribunal of God.

O! here

O! here is the "blood that speaks better things than that of Abel," which called for wrath and vengeance; but this calls for peace and reconciliation. And no balm of Gilead so effectual to heal the wounded spirit. Therefore, as the woman believed she should be cured, if she but touched Jesus; and so she found it, according to her faith, Matth. ix. 21, 22. Thus do thou venture, Christian, by faith, to touch thy Saviour. Though thou art sensible of thy filthiness (as she was) yet go to that "fountain" opened for sin and for uncleanness; and he will not reject even the filthy, that come to be purged and healed; for he knows, that else it will never be done, though thou spend all thy living in seeking after other helpers. But thus shalt thou find the Lord Jesus with thy spirit, to receive thee, and to perfect what concerns thee. When therefore the conscience of sin pulls down thy soul. O look to mount Calvary, to see all thy debts discharged in thy dying Saviour! And hence will result the "joy" and peace in believing." For what so saddens us as our sins? and what sins are those which the blood of the Son of God cannot cleanse us from?

Have respect then to the promise of God in him, and trust to find it performed to thyself. O betake thyself to Christ Jesus! saying, "Lord, save me, or I perish." One good look of thine to me is more worth than a world. O! what so reviving, as for thee to tell me, "Thy sins are forgiven?" and for thee to say to my soul, "I am thy salvation?" from thee is all the hope I have of it; for nothing in myself dare I rely upon; but to my Lord Jesus I look, and from him alone is all my expectation. I throw myself upon him, I leave myself with him; and "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:" and then thy faith will be counted to thee for righteousness; not because of its worth, as it is thy work; but because of his worthiness, whom it takes and appropriates

appropriates to thy soul: for faith receives, but not deserves the benefit.

When no evidences then of thy worthiness do appear, (like the sun and stars hid in cloudy times,) yet faith will shew thee merit enough in thy Redeemer, and refer thee to him, for what thou findest wanting in thyself. Nor is this making too bold with him, when as he calls thee to him, and be sure will not invite thee, to deceive thee, but be better to thee than can be imagined by thee. "What time thou art afraid, then, O trust in him;" and cheer up, after the example, Psal. xliii. 5. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Nay, faith is the very bond of union, to incorporate thee with thy Saviour, as a member of his body: and, as manducation and eating of thy meat makes it thy own, and converts it into thy substance, so believing in Jesus, eying him as the only Saviour, and acquiescing in him for all thy salvation, this is the ligament to fasten thee to him, and the means of conveyance to make him over to thee. And here is the only sure hold; for if thou abide not in him, thou wilt perish, John xv. 6. but "believing, thou shalt have life through his name," chap. xx. 31. Yea, "the Lord will save the righteous, (not because of the righteousness that is in them, but) because they trust in him," Psal. xxxvii. 40. "To whom sware he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" Heb. iii. 18. But ye are "Christ's house, if ye hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end," ver. 6. "Cast not away thy confidence then, which has so great recompense of reward," chap. x. 35. Whoever would put thee out of it, be no more persuaded to part with thy faith, than to part with thy Saviour, or thy soul.

"Be

Be "strong in faith, giving glory to God," like the father of the faithful, Rom. iv. 20. and let the world see, that thou servest the Lord, whom thou darest trust.

And though thou art a miserable sinner, he will be the more glorified to be thy Saviour. Though thou hast been guilty of great sins before thy conversion, yea, and since too, yet why did he bear the punishment of them, if thou must bear it? Though thou wantest righteousness to recommend thee, he has enough to make thee accepted in him. And the justice of heaven is more satisfied in his suffering once, than in thy suffering for ever. Nor is God only merciful, "but just, in justifying the believers on Jesus," Rom. iii. 26. "faithful and just to forgive thee "thy sins," 1 John i. 9. And he that did cast an eye of pity upon thee, even at the worst, be sure, will not cast thee off, when it is grown better with thee; as the Apostle argues, Rom. v. 10. "If when "we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by "the death of his Son; much more being recon-
"ciled, we shall be saved by his life." He that would not disdain thee, when there was nothing of invitation in thee, will he desert thee, after his own blessed work begun in thee, invites and engages him to perfect what concerns thee? "Wherefore shouldst
"thou so fear in the days of evil, when the ini-
"quity of thy heels shall compass thee about?" Psal. xlix. 5. For God in Christ binds himself in a covenant of grace and friendship with all believers; and then the law of friendship obliges to bear with failings and infirmities. So that when thou sinnest of frailty, and art carried away with the force of temptations, to do the evil which thou wouldst not; yea, and when old reckonings and past sins regurgitate and make new head against thee, thou hast
"an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the
"righteous, and he is the propitiation for thy sins,"
1 John

1 John ii. 2. So that the sinful evil shall not be charged upon thee, when thou dost not approve of it, nor consent to it, but makest thy prayers and resistance against it. That which thou bearest, then, as a burden, and longest and strivest to get rid of, though it annoy thee, it shall not destroy thee : for Christ has once atoned, and still intercedeth for such transgressors. And where any has ought against them, he will place it on his own account, and so bring off and clear them.

Dost thou then confess thy sins, and endeavour to break them off, yet dardest not trust him to forgive them? Take heed ; for thus thou thinkest worse of thy heavenly Lord, than thou wouldst do of thy worthy friend upon earth, from whom thou wouldst be bold to expect such favour : whereas the blessed Saviour will not only equal, but exceed all the kindest friends that thou knowest in the world. O-cast thyself then upon that mercy which lies open to all that are in misery ! not because thou art worthy, but because thou hast an almighty and most gracious Redeemer, who distributes it freely : expect it from him, “ without money, and without price ;” not because thou canst so well please him, but because mercy best pleases him, Mic. vii. 18. not for thy sake, but for his own, Isa. xliii. 45. for the fulness of that love, which “ covers all the multitude of thy sins.” And whenever thou fallest into any of them, do but humble thy soul, and make conscience to rise again ; and let thy heart cleave to nothing that God abhors, nor allow thyself to run on in any known way of wickedness ; and then thy sins remaining, when not reset and cherished, shall not be imputed.

Thus let faith in Christ still be thy strong hold ; but, by a conscientious carriage, be full of care to keep that faith in good heart ; so to keep up the good intelligence with heaven, by walking in thy integrity before the Lord. Nor harden thy heart against

against repentance, when sensible of thy offences; and let not that heart condemn thee, for shutting thy eyes against the light, which shews thee thy duty: for the bolder thou makest with sin, the less bold shalt thou be in thy God: and the better thou keepest in with him, the more confidence shalt thou have towards him. Though none of thy holiness can merit heaven, yet he that has merited for thee, appoints thee in this way to walk thither. And though thou dost not “establish thy own righteousness,” nor trust to any thing that thou dost (not to any of thy duties, for more than belongs to them, *i. e.* thou must not trust to them for Christ’s part;) yet because justified persons have somewhat more to do than trusting in Christ Jesus, let me shew, briefly, for thy satisfaction and establishment (as such a one) what God now requires, and will accept of thee.

If then thou dost not take up with the Antinomian conceit, to ask, What need I do any thing, when Christ has done all? yet dost thou run the sense of thy insufficiency to such an extreme, as to count the use of all thy endeavours but a mere impertinence, and askest, what is all my labour worth? or what will it signify, let me do whatever I can? Do not think that grace will ever be the less free, for all thy labouring; but though there is no merit in it, yet grace may be justly withholden for want of it. And still must thou be giving proof and evidence of thy believing, in thy working; and have a careful heart to know “what the will of the Lord concerning thee is;” and put forth all the strength thou hast, to do the things which he commands.

Thus then the case stands:

He requires thee to mortify all thy lusts, and to break off all thy sins; to yield him entire obedience, and to abound in the fruits of righteousness. True.

But then, for all this, he allows thee time, and will supply thee with strength; and will accept thee, doing it in such manner, and by such degrees, as thy frailty will admit. And he does not expect, that all on a sudden thou shouldest shake off every corruption; but that thou shouldest labour to subdue them, according to that measure of strength thou hast received. And when thou layest thy designs, and bended thy forces against the sins that hang upon thee, though thou art not presently rid of them, he will accept thee.

And though thou canst not quite banish the corruption from dwelling in thee, nor get the full and perfect conquest over it; yet, if thou warrest against it, to prevent the reign of it, and wilt not yield thyself a vassal to it; but whenever thou art carried captive by it, thou groanest under the bondage, and strugglest to regain thy freedom, thou shalt be accepted.

Thy Lord does not look for unfinning righteousness now from thee; for, if all were so right and well with thee, of what use then would the Saviour be to thee? Hadst thou a full sufficiency in thyself, there would be an end then of leaning by faith upon him. He expects not that thou shouldest punctually answer all that ever the law demands; but that thou shouldest approve his law, and have a will present to do it, and desire and strive still better to fulfil it. And if thou hast a sincere love and respect to all his commands, though thou failest in the performance of many particulars, he will accept thee, and take thy fulfilling of his law (*καὶ ἐπιείκειαν*) with a gospel mitigation, and not exact it (*καὶ ἀκριβείαν*) according to the legal rigour.

He would have thee fruitful in good works, and to "let thy light shine before men," that they may see them. Yet he expects not now the harvest, but the first-fruits of goodness; and stands not so much

on the actions, as the affections; not on the perfection of the work done, but the readiness of mind, and alacrity of the heart that it comes from.

The righteousness inherent that he calls for, is not an absolute freedom from evil, or a perfection of obedience; no, but the confessing of thy unrighteousness, and bewailing thy sinfulness, and longing and labouring more and more to get out of it, and to rise to a more eminent height of newness of life, and to fill up all the wants and imperfections, by faith and affiance, in the most holy Saviour. And then, though I dare not tell thee (as some do) that Christ has merited this for thee, that thou shouldst be justified by thy own doings, and inherent righteousness; yet I dare assure thee, that imperfect services shall be taken in good part from thee, when thou art by faith interested in the perfect Mediator and Redeemer; for it is through his death, that the God of heaven reconciles us, and so “presents
“us holy, and unblameable, and unreprouceable in
“his sight;” (not upon the impossible condition, that we never any more do amiss; but) “if we
“continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and
“be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,” Col. i. 21, 22, 23.

Put forth thyself then to do as thou canst, and that will give thee a “testimony of conscience,” which will be thy “rejoicing, in simplicity and god-
“ly sincerity, to have had thy conversation in the
“world,” 2 Cor. i. 12. And when thy heart condemns thee not for any wickedness allowed in it, then shalt thou have “confidence towards God,” and find his kingdom within thee to be not only “righteousness, but peace and joy in the Holy
“Ghost.” So that thou mayest take comfort even in thy personal righteousness, as it is an evidence of grace, and of thy implantation in the living vine. And thus “proving thy own work, thou mayest
“have

"have rejoicing in thyself, and not in another," Gal. vi. 4. unless it be in him, that has made thee to differ, and altered thee so much for the better; yea, in him, who (according to that new covenant which thou art under) has promised to "put his law," not only "in thy mind (to think of it) but in thy heart," (to delight in it;) and "cause thee to walk in his statutes, and to keep "his judgments and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. and (for what thou failest) to be "merciful to thy "unrighteousness and thy sins, and remember thy "iniquities no more," Heb. viii. 10, 12. Thou hast encouragement, then, to go on cheerfully with thy duty, though it be attended with frailty, and "delight to do the will of God," according to the proportion of thy ability.

But having done thy best, yet trust to nothing that thou doest, nor mistake thy way for thy journey's end. No; let thy Saviour alone still have the honour to be thy refuge and fortress, thy tower of defence, and rock of salvation, where thou layest up all thy hope, and on which thou hast all thy dependence. Nor think it enough to imitate them, who make him no other amends, for sharing his honour, in satisfying for themselves, but only to shut up their collects, *per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum*, as the acute Pemble perstrings the Roman faith. It is not such a formality that will pay him his due glory. But even when thou doest the best service to him, yet must thou repose all thy hope and confidence in him. And as thou must not so depend upon his mercy, as to neglect the care of thy duty; so neither have such dependence on any of thy duties, as to cast away thy trust in his mercies. Only give duty and obedience their due place and office under thy Lord Redeemer; but ascribe not the work and glory of Christ to any the best of thy works; set them not in competition with him, much less in opposition,

opposition to him, to make them the price of redemption, or meritorious of thy salvation. O never think to set up such a righteousness of works, as shall satisfy the justice of Heaven, without being beholden to the satisfaction of Christ Jesus; But, humbly bewailing thy own unrighteousness, plead the righteousness of thy Saviour, as that wherein thou wouldest be found, and by which thou resolvest ever to abide.

For (according to the Belgic Confession) “ we shall straight be overwhelmed with the Majesty of God, if we present ourselves before it, trusting either to ourselves, or to any other creature; and there will be nothing but doubting and wavering, and the conscience always staggering, and in torment, without an entire reliance on the satisfaction of Jesus Christ.”

And so the church of Bohemia, “ Christ alone is our perfection and fulfilling of the law, our life, and our righteousness; and whosoever receive him by faith, and repose the trust of their souls in him, have all their sins washed away in his blood; so that after they need not fear condemnation.”

And the council of Auspurg does not miscale it, “ Pharisaic blindness,” to mislike the doctrine of justification by faith;” which extols the honour of Christ, “ offers sweet and sure consolation to godly minds, teaches the true knowledge of God’s mercy, and produces his right worship and eternal life.”

And accordingly have all those Protestant churches in the world, the confessions of whose faith I have seen, signified their sense of this doctrine; a doctrine that quells our fears, and raises our souls, from jealousy of the Lord’s mercy, to “ rejoice in hope of his glory;” from groaning under “ the body of this death,” to sing praise unto God, that gives us “ the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But

But they that set men to dig justification out of the mines of their own righteousness, push them upon an impossible task, and stretch conscience upon a tormenting rack, to sting and wound, without offering any true ease and healing, proposing such a method of justification wherein it can never be effected; and yet insisting peremptorily upon it, that so it must be done; whipping and spurring poor creatures to carry mountains, for which, when they see their utter insufficiency, thus their peace is ruined, and there they are left in doleful distress and desperate agony, and so frightened from reliance on the blessed Jesus, that they scarce dare turn their heads to look that way.

O miserable comforters, that would drive us out of this resort! Wretched Christians, that so derogate from the merits of Christ, as if they were not fit to be relied on! which are indeed the only stay for a poor sinful soul to take hold of, if ever that soul would have peace, and be at rest. God knows what sorry keepers of the peace we are, and how ill it is preserved when lying only upon us, who are every day breaking with him, and flying out against him, after he has been reconciled to us. It is his peace alone that "keeps our hearts," Phil. iv. 7. And "in me ye shall have peace," saith our Lord, John xvi. 33. not in all the best that ever you can do yourselves. And therefore it is in Christ Jesus that we must "rejoice; and not have any confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. nor be so hardy as to cast ourselves upon a trial, by that law, which will for certain condemn us: for our sinning against the law has not freed us from it; and where-ever we come short of obedience to the whole law, we are guilty of sin, and liable to the curse. Nor can we through virtue of the gospel-covenant be justified by our personal righteousness, because there is no less perfect righteousness required in the gospel, than
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in the law, the same holy rule being still in full force. And if we are justified by inherent righteousness, then are we still under the covenant of works; for if it be of works, it is no more of grace. Nay, such as make obedience and perseverance the condition of our justification, offer that which can never be accomplished till our death. And so no justification (according to them) is to be had in this life. And then (in the judgment of our church) neither can one good work ever be done in this life: for we are taught. (Art. 12.) that "works are the fruits of "faith, and follow after justification;" and (Art. 13.) that "works done before justification, are so "far from being good and pleasing to God, that "they have the nature of sin." And if justification be only a reversion, and suspended for term of life, where then is the peace and joy which believers have in it, as a done thing already past? for so the Apostle speaks of it, Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by "faith, we have peace with God." And if we are justified by faith in our Saviour's blood, what works then are joined with that? For what is faith in his blood, but a depending upon the meritorious effusion of that precious blood, for the gratuitous remission of our sins? And if God "impute righteousness without works," Rom. iv. 6. then we may indeed rejoice and triumph in the blessed effects of his grace, already wrought in us, which is the true ingenuous spirit of the gospel, opposite to that servile spirit, which some are at so much pains to bring believers under.

And when God in mercy (with regard to our necessity, and for the relief of our impotency) hath given out the subsidiary command, provided for our lapsed state, that we should "believe on the name of his Son," (and so believe unto righteousness, and to salvation;) how do they slight their souls, as well as their peace, and throw away their salvation,

salvation, together with their consolation, that make light of the only Mediator, and dispute and cavil themselves out of their faith, and make but a jest of believing in Christ, to the saving of the soul! O what madness, to reject the only sure hold in the world, and stand off from the only safe refuge, where rest is to be found for the soul!

Men may crack of their righteousness, good conscience, and innocence; and well if such as boast most of it, had more to shew for it. We plead as much as ever they can do for it. And therefore our doctrine can bring no one under any danger for the want of it. But then if it be charged upon us as our crime, that we caution men from trusting to it, we are willing to bear that burden, and wish that they do not bring a far heavier upon themselves, whose turn nothing will serve, but they must work their own justification out of it. One would think their proud opinion should need no other confutation, but to hear conscience tell them their own, what they have done, and what they do deserve. But if nothing save the tribunal of God will silence them, thither we must remit them. And when it comes to the putting to for life and death eternal, I doubt not but the best then will soon have enough of it, and be glad to betake themselves to another plea. All sophistical wrangling for the merit of works will be for ever dashed, and struck dead at that judgment-seat, where will be no trifling or collusion of words, but all shall be searched and tried to the bottom, before that glorious MAJESTY, whose brightness (as one of our first reformers represents it) “darkens the sun, whose strength melts down
 “the mountains, whose anger shakes the earth,
 “whose purity makes even the heavens look sullied, whose wisdom catches the subtle in their craftiness, whose justice the angels themselves
 “cannot

“ cannot stand before, whose wrath once kindled,
“ burns to the lowest hell, and to the utmost eter-
“ nity.” O let the best men that ever lived, offer
their lives and actions to be scanned before this
most worthy, but dreadful JUDGE eternal; and then
tell me, if Eliphaz said too much, Job xv. 14, 15,
16. “ What is man, that he should be clean? and
“ he which is born of a woman, that he should be
“ righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his
“ faints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.
“ How much more abominable and filthy is man,
“ which drinketh iniquity like water?”

Though men may now cavil it out with their fel-
lows, yet all the defences and confidences, how will
they vanish at the presence of their glorious Maker,
when he comes to judge the world? And when the
last trumpet shall sound, they will be roused out of
the fine golden dreams of their own riches and righ-
teousness; and be confounded even at the very best
worth of their own, upon which they were wont so
much to value themselves; and not backward then
to make David’s confession, Psal. cxix. 120. “ My
“ flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid
“ of thy judgments.” And may not this stain the
pride of all glorying in any thing that we have
done, or can do, and humble the lofty looks, and
bring down the haughtiness of man, that the “ Lord
“ alone will be exalted in that ” dreadful “ day ; ”
and to him alone, and not to any man, shall be
all the glory of the salvation of every one that is
saved?

*Almighty Judge, how shall poor mortals brook
Thy dreadful look,
Able a heart of iron to appall,
When thou shalt call
For every man’s peculiar book !*

*What others mean to do, I know not well ;
But I hear tell,
That some will turn thee to some leaves therein
So void of sin,
That they in merit shall excel.*

*But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline,
And thrust a Testament into thy hand ;
Let that be scann'd,
There thou shalt find, my faults are thine.*

HERB.

And if any still think they can stand well enough upon their own legs, and are for “ establishing their own righteousness,” O Christians, do not ye count it a disparagement to imitate the spouse of Christ that is represented, Cant. viii. 5. “ coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Belov- ed.” But, as your weakness makes you all to need the prop, so will you shew your wisdom in making use of it. And take it not for a thing of indifferency, but your bounden duty, when this is “ the command of God, that you should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,” 1 John iii. 23. O bless his name, that he has given you his Son to believe in, and obliged you to that, which is your only sure support, and everlasting consolation. And let no disputers or scorners abroad in the world, nor any unworthiness or failings at home in yourselves, ever pluck you from this fastness, nor wrench you out of this fiducial affiance in the Lord your righteousness and your Redeemer. But look to the blessed Jesus, and depend all upon him ; and hope for life only from his death : and trust to his merits and righteousness alone, for the pardon of all your sins, for the whole of your acceptance with God,
and

and all that ever you would have to do you good, both here and for ever.

And thus "submitting to the righteousness of "God," and reposing your confidence in the Son of God, your expectation shall not perish; you shall not be ashamed of your hope, but shall believe, to the quieting of your minds, and to the saving of your souls.

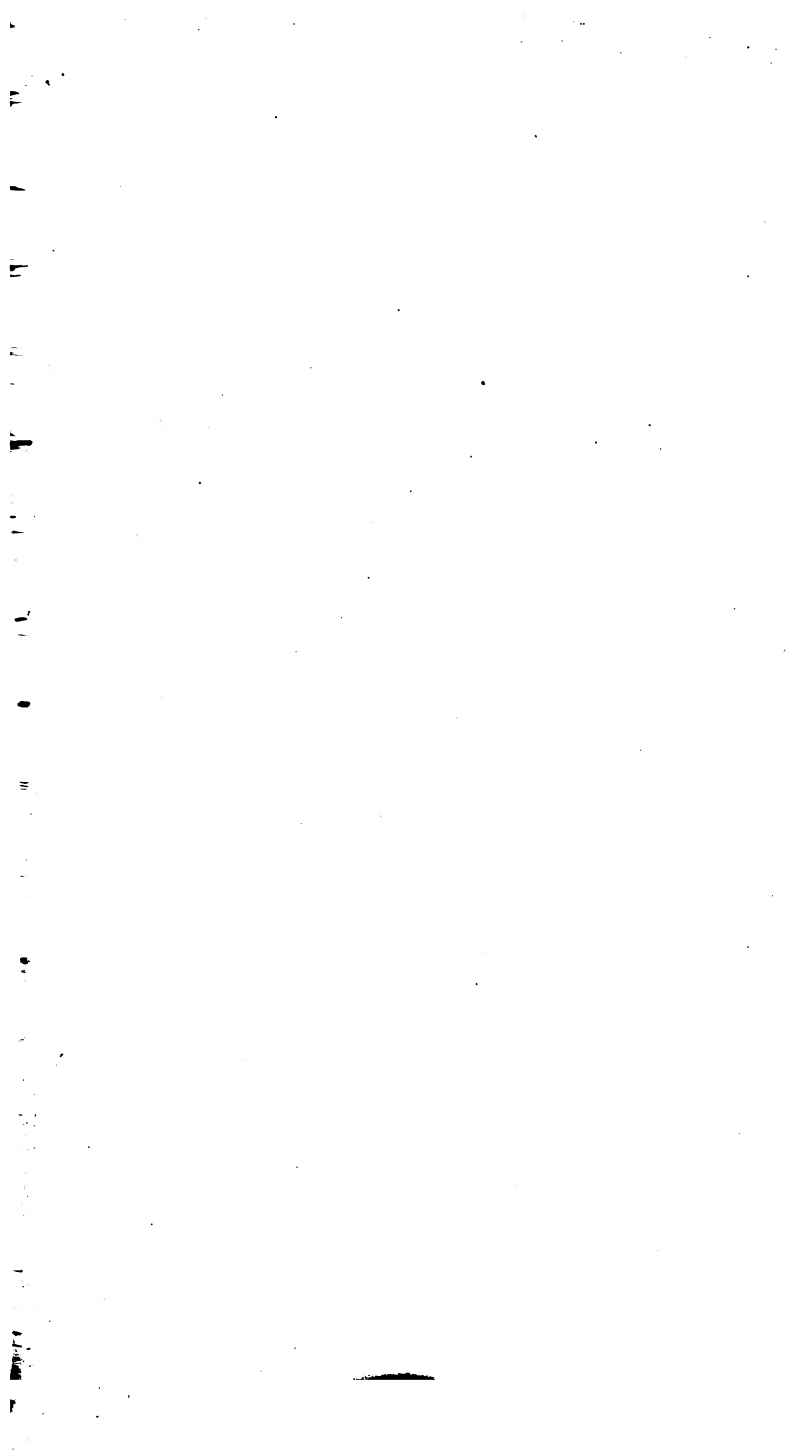
COLLECT *for FIFTH SUNDAY after Epiph. and part of Sexages.* •

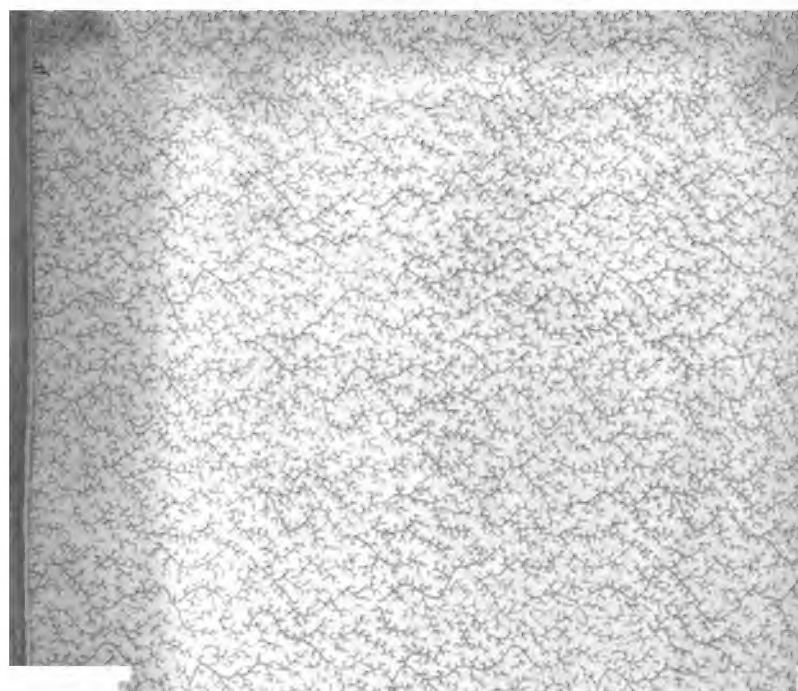
" **O** LORD, who seeest that we put not our trust
" in any thing that we do, we beseech Thee,
" to keep thy church and household continually in
" thy true religion, that they, who do lean only
" upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may ever-
" more be defended by thy mighty power, through
" Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

F I N I S.

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MAR 11 1913

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